

# COUNTRY LIFE

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THE HON. FRANCES FITZALAN-HOWARD.



THE Journal for all interested in  
Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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## THE LAND UNION

MR. PRETYMAN'S scheme for an association to attend to the interests of land is receiving a hearty welcome. It was fortunate in the hour of its birth, for it came at a time when all who have to do with land are in alarm at the attacks made on it. There is a type of mind which regards land as a kind of property that may be raided for any purpose whatever. Few take the trouble to define what it is. They simply regard it as wealth expressed in a solid and tangible equation. In reality land is nothing of the kind. Even such fertility as Nature originally gave it would disappear under systems of regular annual cropping were capital not employed to refresh and reinvigorate it. Labour must be employed in its preparation, manure used to repair its waste, seed given to render it fruitful. It is the crop that is the wealth; the land itself is only part of the raw material. No one doubts the soundness of the principle that taxation should never be applied to the first stage of manufacture, but to the finished product. Yet the growing custom is to increase the burdens on land, as though they were not too great already.

At the beginning land was the source of all wealth, and, consequently, if it were taxed, so was the whole country. That was why tithes, for example, were confined practically to land. They were supposed to represent a tenth of the entire income of the country. But times change, and to-day only a few great fortunes come direct from English land; a vast majority are drawn from other sources. The City could easily buy up the country; yet to land, in the first instance, goes the Chancellor in search of funds. He pays no heed to the burdens it has already to bear. Payment is required of the landowner's income and property during his life and at his death. Not only must he contribute very largely to the support of the Church and pay a special land tax, but his share of the local rates is enormous and disproportionate. Compare the position of a landowner with, say, an estate with five thousand pounds a year and one who draws a similar income from stocks and shares. One must live up to a certain style in the ancestral hall; the other may, if he pleases, inhabit a mere lodge or cottage. The rates, taxes, tithes and charges that have to be borne by the one are out of all proportion to those charged on the other's model establishment. Yet when new funds have to be obtained they are almost invariably raised from the former source. And should any luck come to the landowner, any windfall from lucky building or development, then it must be, in Gladstone's characteristic word, "intercepted." But if the two shilling rubber share rises to forty shillings, there is no corresponding outburst.

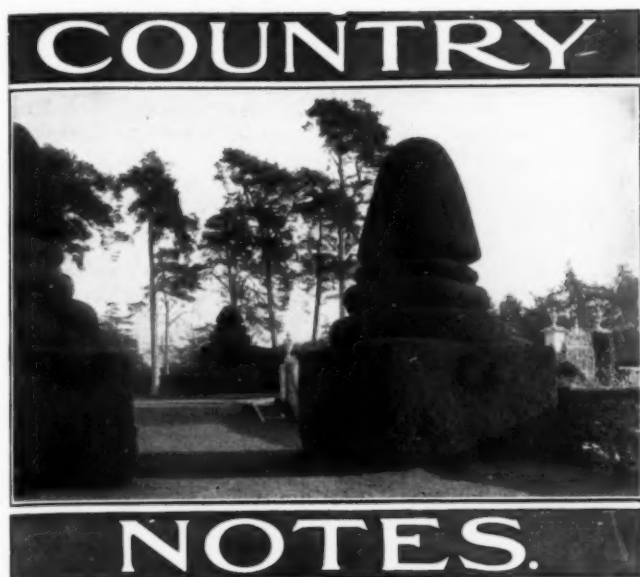
To check this tendency is naturally the prime object of Mr. Pretyman and his friends. Success or failure must in the end be due to the strength of the force he can rally. When his army is numbered, what will it be found to contain? There are first the landowners, great and small, and the number of the latter he hopes to increase by the creation of a large peasant proprietary. But probably he attaches to this form of recruit more importance than it deserves. At any rate, a thriving tenant, a warm man, as his neighbours would call him, has as rooted an objection to confiscation as any man. Others whose help Mr. Pretyman hopes to command are "agriculturalists, architects and surveyors, auctioneers and house agents, bankers, barristers and solicitors, builders and the allied trades and their workmen and labourers, house property owners, insurance policy holders, land and estate agents, landowners, members of benefit and building societies, mineral owners and lessees, shareholders in land and insurance companies, tenants and lessees, trustees and mortgagees."

It is a goodly list, but the best members of the Union are likely to be those who have not only an interest but a predominant interest in land. Having got together an army and defined the object at which he is aiming, the next duty of the commander-in-chief should be to draw up a plan of campaign. This will have to be done with the greatest care. The time has not yet come, and we hope never will, in which all interested in land belong to one political party, and it would be a fatal error to oppose those who hold strongly democratic views. Practically speaking, one of the most useful steps that it is possible to take would be to induce Liberals to enter the Union. We might go further and say it is essential, since in these days when great issues are decided by counting votes, the leader who cannot appeal to the majority is powerless. During last session Mr. Pretyman himself fought like a wise and valiant soldier. If he has a cohort of men as skilled as himself who will devote their whole time and attention to the one subject a great step will be taken towards establishing a sound system of defence. The characteristics of the organisation dwelt upon by Mr. Pretyman are as follows: First, it should cover the whole of the United Kingdom; that is, it must have a central organisation and branches up and down the country. It will promote small ownerships of land. Much of its work will be educative in character, so that all who have interests in land shall be instructed as to the effect on them of new taxation and rating proposals. It might not unfairly be described as a watching and fighting force that is setting itself watchfully and vigilantly to guard the great landed interests of the country, and to issue no uncertain note of warning when these are in any way threatened or attacked. For this purpose it will hold itself in continuous readiness to join any party likely to carry out its design.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of the Hon. Frances Fitzalan-Howard, daughter of Lady Howard of Glossop. She was presented at the first Court of the present season.

\* It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



**L**ORD ROBERTS never makes a remark about a soldier's life which does not carry weight, and we hope that serious attention will be given to the letter concerning the employment of ex-soldiers which he has written to a Taunton man in Australia. The problem is one with which we are all more or less familiar. The life history of the British soldier is easily described. He is picked up by the recruiting sergeant in a typical case as a lumpish, stupid, stooping lad whose physical constitution has received little or no attention during the days of childhood. A few months of drill work wonders. They turn the raw recruit into a smart, straight, well-set-up young soldier, who, usually, in those days, not only has developed an unexpected chest, but in his pride blows it out an inch or two more than is necessary. And as long as he is in the Service he is proud of it. The English system, whatever be its drawbacks, at least has the merit of inculcating spirit and *esprit de corps* into the men; but the self-confidence it inspires receives a rude shock when the soldier retires into private life, and expects, as he often does, to be received with open arms—that is to say, to have well-paid situations as it were thrown at him.

The account given by Lord Roberts explains the position of the soldier. There are only a few places open to him, and for these there are many applicants, so that it is no wonder that eminent commanders frequently receive letters from men who have conducted themselves well in the field and are now brought to the verge of starvation in the street. It is under these circumstances that Lord Roberts feels inclined to take a favourable view of emigration. After the training which the British Army gives them, the men are fitted to do well in a new country, and the homely fare and outdoor life will no doubt suit them admirably. The only cause for regret is that their going away will be a loss to this country of men who might be of great service in the hour of need. The unemployed ex-soldier is a very different person from the unemployed degenerate, who, from laziness and shirking, has become mentally, morally and physically demoralised, and who would be no more welcome in a rising Colony than the destitute alien is in the Port of London.

In another part of the paper some details are given of the agricultural stock-in-trade of Great Britain as it is set forth in the annual statistics issued from Whitehall. The figures are more encouraging than any which have appeared for a considerable number of years. It is true that Mr. Rew warns us not to be too jubilant about them. But facts are "chiefs that winna ding." The area devoted to wheat last year showed a remarkable increase. The number of horses employed in agriculture was the largest yet recorded. Cattle and sheep have multiplied. The natural inference is that our greatest industry is at last rising above the wave of depression that set in with the fatal year 1879; and in considering the statistics of last year we have to remember that it was a very unfavourable one for the cultivator. The number of rainy days in which men could not work was considerably above the average, and it cannot be said that any part of the year was particularly favourable to crops or stock.

The Public Trustee is evidently filling a place that was too long vacant. His office and staff have grown rapidly within the last twelve months. At first there was work for only five people and now a hundred and ten are employed, and it seems almost necessary that a suitable building should be erected for

housing them. In 1908 the fees earned by the Department amounted to four thousand four hundred and sixty pounds, and last year they were three times as much, viz., thirteen thousand seven hundred and thirty-three pounds. It is a self-supporting Government Department, and last year showed a surplus of two hundred and forty-four pounds. All this goes to show that there are many members of the public who are perplexed, when the end of their days is drawing near, to select trustees who will be not only faithful but efficient.

It is so easy for the honest trustee to get rid of a great part of his difficulties by investing the bulk of his trust money in Consols, or some other stock very nearly as sound and paying no higher rate of interest; but the vigilance that is brought into play in this Department is proved by the fact that the Public Trustee has been able to obtain interest at the rate of three pounds ten shillings and ninepence per cent. on the six hundred thousand pounds which he has had to invest during the last twelve months. This applies only to those sums which he had to deal with by the terms of the will. Where his range was wide he was able to secure a return of over four per cent., with due regard to security and stability. These are but hints to show the character of the work that is being done, but they are sufficient to make it very nearly certain that in the future the help of the Public Trustee will be called upon more than in the past. In the end, perhaps, the private trustee will fade altogether from actual life.

#### TO AN OLD COCK PARTRIDGE.

No doubt I often failed to bring you down  
With either barrel as you hurtled by,  
Flushed from the swedes, a patch of whirling brown  
Against the autumn sky.

No doubt I murmured certain words, but now  
Vanished is all regret, and I rejoice,  
When in the dusk of March across the plough  
Of Galleons comes your voice.

Is it Love's note to call your mate to rest?  
Is it a fighting challenge that you fling?  
I know not; but to me it is the best  
Of all the sounds of Spring.

I love the thrush, who wakes the world at dawn,  
The ring-dove cooing in the coppiced park,  
The blackbird in the chestnut on the lawn,  
The Heaven-adoring lark.

But somehow more than these, tho' these be good,  
The glamour of the Country you impart,  
And to us revellers in field and wood  
Disclose her very heart.  
R. S. T. C.

Sir John Bigham, after his brief career as President of the Divorce, Probate and Admiralty Division, has been raised to the peerage, and has said farewell to the scene of forty years' hard work. In the course of his valedictory address, which, in every line, was manly and graceful, he made some remarks about the Press which were at once robust and amusing. The latter element lay in a little story he told of Lord Watson, the famous Scotch judge. Sir John told Lord Watson that he thought he interrupted counsel's argument too often with his criticisms, and received the unexpected reply, "Eh, mon, you should never complain of that, for I never interrupt a fool." He applied this to the criticisms passed upon his own work by the public Press. Sir John was not one of those judges who thought that his sentence was the last word to be uttered, and that there could be no question about his wisdom and fairness. On the contrary, he welcomed honest and courteous criticism, even when it was adverse to his decision. That, surely, was the right spirit in which to act. English people never have been accustomed to look upon any man as infallible, and yet there is no country in the world in which the legal judges receive so much voluntary respect.

It would appear that Mr. Harold Cox has found work which is almost as important as representing Preston in the House of Commons, namely, to guide the policy and affairs of the British Constitutional Association. This is a non-party association consisting mainly of those who hold, as Sir William Chance put it, that "the party system is working very badly." Since the occurrence of the last General Election it has been criticised freely from both sides. According to one set of commentators the "feudal screw" is used unduly, and according to the other set of commentators large bodies of working-men are moved from one side to another in implicit obedience to the mandate of leaders and without the exercise of any individual judgment. It cannot be said that those who are returned to Parliament by the working of the political machinery really represent their constituents in any but a nominal fashion. The British Constitutional Association is



trying to steer a middle course between these two opposites. As far as we understand the matter, it opposes the Socialistic attack on property in one direction and the tendency to overlook the claims of the poor in the other.

We have always expressed a very cordial sympathy with all the aims and actions of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. The Trust, which has offices at 25, Victoria Street, S.W., is now issuing a booklet setting forth the objects of its existence and some of the good work, in the way of preserving for the nation historical and picturesque places, which it has already accomplished. It is stated that the annual income of the Trust amounts to something under four hundred and fifty pounds, which, as we can well believe, is required for the expense of office work and organisation. The council say that they do not feel justified in making continuous appeals for funds for the purchase of specified places, and express a desire for a larger membership of subscribers to make them more independent of these special donations. Doubtless they may be very well trusted to use any such funds with a wise discretion; but at the same time we feel that the public is far more likely to respond to an appeal for a special purpose than to subscribe to a fund. It is no reflection on the judgment of the council to say that it is only natural that the donors of subscriptions or donations will be more liberally disposed if they know beforehand the purpose to which their generosity is to be turned.

In the long hall of the Savoy Hotel on Saturday night a brilliant scene was witnessed. It was the end of the great cable match at chess between an English and American team. Practitioners at the game, amateur and professional, had assembled in great numbers. Some formed a ring round the giant pieces on the first board which showed the progress of the match between Blackburn and Marshall. Others had little boards, on which they set up the positions in the various contests, groups forming round them as they demonstrated the issues of each game. They were all in a very good humour, for at an early hour it was apparent that the Newnes Trophy would not on this occasion be carried across the Atlantic. At the end of play America had scored only two and a-half games against England's three and a-half, and, although three games were unfinished and reserved for adjudication, it was obvious that two of them must go to this country. The only doubtful one was that played on the top board. The result is a fine testimony to the increased skill of British players, also to the increased interest that is being taken in chess. As usual the cable was worked perfectly, and in one instance a move was made in London, telegraphed to New York, and the reply move to it received in the space of a single minute.

Discussion about the House of Lords has now begun in earnest, and the newspaper reader will probably have more than enough of it for some time to come. No doubt many suggestions will be brought forward with the object of improving one or other party's position. One suggestion at least has already been made that would not come under the description of being partisan. It comes from that great administrator Sir Bampfylde Fuller. He proposes that in any reform of the Upper House attention should be given to the representation of India and the Overseas Dominions. To do that would be to act strictly in accordance with the spirit of the British constitution. Originally the House of Lords was called together because each of its members represented a territory: the duke his dukedom, the earl his earldom, the baron his barony and so forth. The Church and Law were represented in the same way. To add to these representatives of the great Colonies would only be a natural enlargement of the character of the House. Whether the hereditary principle be retained or not retained, it seems to us that this idea of Sir Bampfylde Fuller thoroughly deserves to be carried out. It has been mooted before, but at no other time has there been evidence of serious intention among all parties to introduce reform. Liberal, Conservative and Independent are united upon the point. Therefore the representation of the Colonies in the House of Lords is for the first time practicable, and if that chamber be changed at all it ought to become more, and not less, of an Imperial assembly.

Lord Rosebery on Monday night explained to the House of Lords the scheme he has drawn up for its reconstruction. He moved three resolutions, of which the first emphasised the need of an efficient Second Chamber as an integral part of the British Constitution. The third stated that reform and reconstitution must be preceded by the acceptance of the principle that the possession of a peerage should no longer of itself give the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords. What the result will be no one can say at present, as the official reply, delivered by Lord Morley, consisted chiefly of the advice that the House would do well to wait until the proposals of the

Government are before it. There is much to be said, however, in favour of following Lord Rosebery's leadership on this subject. He is able to look at it with a detached and non-partisan eye, and his proposals would probably be more welcome to the country at large than would any that came from a partisan source. Lord Rosebery's disinterestedness admits of no doubt or question.

It is satisfactory to hear, on the authority of the experts, that the tobacco crop of 1909 in Cuba was a very fine one. It seems likely that 1909 will be known as a great tobacco year among those who are connoisseurs of fine cigars. When the Americans conquered Cuba we were told that we should get no more really good cigars in England, or in Europe generally, but it is not easy to see that the conquest has made any considerable difference. Probably the trade follows the same routes as before. Moreover, it is quite certain that the Americans have not quite the same taste in cigars, as they have not the same taste in wines, as we have. It is likely enough that the difference in climate makes a difference both in the essential qualities of tobacco and wine and also in the taste of the consumer. Certainly the Mexican cigars, which are excellent in the country of their production, seem to have a less pleasant flavour when we get them over here; and, on the other hand, the Cuban cigar is said to be even finer in its taste here than it is before it has crossed the sea. That, however, sounds rather a paradox.

The exceptionally fine weather we have recently experienced has brought out the spring flowers in rich abundance, and our parks and gardens are bright with masses of crocuses and other plants that give life to woodland and border at this season of the year. There is much to learn from the planting in such places as the Royal Gardens, Kew, and one of the chief lessons is the value of grouping. A cloud of colour comes from the crocuses near, perhaps, a group of trees; but this is exactly the right principle to adopt. A few crocuses, hyacinths, daffodils or any other spring flower have an individual beauty, but for effect they must be seen in abundance. There is no greater evidence of the advance in gardening and the most beautiful ways of using flowers than is to be seen in our public gardens at this season. Masses of colour of the most beautiful shades impart strength to the richest effects that the gardener can produce.

#### GLAMING.

The evening sun is sinking low in shades of deepening red.  
The waterfowl is crooning softly from its willow bed.  
Selené throws her sombre cloak about a world of sleep,  
And through a curtain formed of clouds her nightly watch doth keep  
K. H.

An interesting question has been raised as to the longevity of birds by an instance that was recorded in one of the German newspapers. A crow was shot with a ring upon its leg bearing a date of more than a hundred years ago. Of course, this is not absolute proof that the bird was more than a century old, as there is no means of ascertaining when or by whom the ring was put on; but it has long been a tradition that great age is attained by "the many wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery home." Correspondents have been writing to the papers giving instances of what they considered great ages attained by birds. Thus, a skylark has been kept in captivity for twenty-one years, a bullfinch for sixteen, a blackbird for ten, a chaffinch for eight and a linné for eleven years. These instances are from the experience of a single bird-fancier, and they are curiously divergent from other recorded occurrences. In our own experience the bullfinch is a very short-lived bird, though perhaps this may have been due to defective management. The chaffinch is very long-lived, and we have given many instances in COUNTRY LIFE of birds living to a good old age. Perhaps the best example are the peacocks. Some of these birds can be traced back more than a hundred years.

It is interesting to see that a stické court is being built at Queen's Club. The game of stické is not yet as well known as it deserves, but it has so many good qualities that it is almost certain to become popular. For the uninitiated it may roughly be described as lawn tennis with back and side walls, although there are considerable differences between the two games beyond those involved by the presence of the walls. The method of scoring, for instance, is that of racquets, and it is legal to volley a service. Stické has one great advantage over lawn tennis from a bad player's point of view. Everyone who has played lawn tennis in a spasmodic and amateurish manner must have observed that he wins as long as he denies himself all the enjoyment of hard hitting and contents himself with poking the ball ignobly over the net. So soon, however, as he lets himself go the ball soars far out of court and



his opponent triumphs. Now at stické, with the back wall to check him, he may lash out as light-heartedly as he pleases. And to hit a ball really hard is one of the supreme pleasures in all games. The walls, moreover, must necessarily tend to produce longer rallies, and stické is, therefore, likely to provide exercise as violent as anyone could desire.

It is a striking sign of the mildness of the late winter and early spring that plovers' eggs should have been sent up to the King from Salisbury as early in the year as March 8th. It is quite an abnormal date. Even so, they were too late to reach His Majesty before his departure for Biarritz. In olden days the tenure on which the Bass Rock used to be held was that the occupier should send annually a dozen gannets' eggs to the Crown. The gannet's egg has the strong flavour of all sea-birds' eggs, and perhaps the Crown was a little puzzled what to do with this perquisite; but in the olden days, when they used to look on a stuffed heron as a regal delicacy, they may have had palates which found the gannet's egg agreeable. There is no doubt that tastes change. One of the dishes which our ancestors used to prize, but which we seldom see on tables now, is roast

peacock. We make a mistake in not appreciating this gallant bird more. The young peacock is excellent eating. It is said that many rooks' eggs are sold under the name of plovers' eggs, but the white of the rook's egg has not the same transparency, nor is the flavour nearly as good.

Salmon angling seems to be very good in Scotland in those rivers which have not been too heavily flooded to be fishable. Up in the far North, on the Helmsdale, Mr. McCorquodale had sixteen fish in four days' fishing, and all of good weight for that river. They do not seem to be doing much as yet on the English rivers. The distribution of the rainfall has been altogether abnormal. Instead of the cold and dry breezes from the East which are typical of the weather of the earliest days of spring, a great anti-cyclone, reaching from Madeira right up to the White Sea and remaining stationary there, has permitted the westerly broken weather to come in off the Atlantic and to bring mild winds and heavy rains with it. It is all good for the fish running up and the ultimate stock in the rivers, but for the present the result is to put too much water in most of them for the fisherman's purpose.

## FROM THE SWISS LAKES.

By ALGERNON BLACKWOOD.

THE suggestiveness of sudden contrast must always be a quickener to the inner life—that sharp little spur forward it gives to the imagination—and to descend from a sojourn of months among the frozen immobilities of the high Alps, and catch a great bit of the world's surface in dancing motion, gave me a sensation the other day that was keen enough to be properly described as a "shock." For it seemed like passing from death into life to drop from the terrors of the silent heights and come abruptly upon the blue waters of Lake Geneva, rippling for miles in sunshine, plashing along the shores as with a sound of children playing, and carrying to and fro the white lateen sails in foretaste already of the summer. And the contrast—the transition, at least—seemed all the more sudden and effective because deep in the bosom of the lake, like giant thoughts maturing in some steady mind, lay

the reflections of those very mountains left two short hours before. For the Valais Alps that tower beyond the southern shores, facing the strip from Lausanne to Villeneuve, drop into the lake dark images of themselves that stretch halfway across and readily conjure to an imaginative mind the picture of death waiting inevitably in the depths of all things.

Of all the big puddles that indent the surface of the map of Europe, Lac Lemane has been my favourite—and for a somewhat bizarre reason connected with the fancies of childhood. I always thought of its crescent shape as formed by some Blue Moon in her first quarter that had tumbled from the sky and embedded herself here between the Jura and the Alps. What she loses in picturesque variety of shore and bay, she gains in the perfect symmetry of her delicately-curved lips, this crescent-shaped depression brimming



G. R. Ballance.

LAKE GENEVA: BY THE QUAY AT MONTREUX.

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G. R. Ballance.

ON LAKE GARDA.

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*G. R. Ballance.**AT MONTREUX.*

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with blue water. Just now, of course, she is peculiarly "brimming," for, in common with the other lakes of Switzerland, after the downpours of the winter months she has about as much water as she can comfortably hold; and the poplars that sentinel the shores here and there like *campanile* seem from a distance to be standing well over their ankles among the waves. On all sides the slopes discharge their melting snows, and the Rhone, swollen and turbulent, comes tearing in with an almost unprecedented volume of mountain waters.

G. R. Ballance.



BECALMED ON LAKE GENEVA.

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Everywhere along the northern and western shores, as the lake curves from Chillon round to Morges (where Paderewski leads his farmer life), and along *la côte* past Nyon to Geneva, the vineyard slopes are all running and a-drip, while on the opposite side the streams from Faucigny and Chablais come foaming down, only yielding in torrential value to the floods that come rushing further east from the Valais snow-fields behind St. Gingolphe and Bouveret. At night, leaning out of my hotel window, I heard this sound of many waters faintly in the air, and irresistibly came the picture of the lake as a great receiving station—some patient mother of the fairy tales taking into her untroubled heart all the passion and complaint of these troubled and

troublesome children, listening to their babbling, confused tales of journeys and adventures, neither believing nor disbelieving, but accepting it all without interruption or contradiction, and finally smoothing them all down into silence and sleep, their voices hushed behind her own quiet breathing. All night long the murmur of these water-voices went on, rising and falling, telling their endless tales as they have told them since the beginning of the world—the tales of winter's cruelties and their own release and escape on the wings of the first south wind.

And the old lake, it seemed to me, was well content to listen, letting their wild stories murmur through her dreams; for they brought to her another and far more pregnant message that just now is beginning to run secretly all over the world—the message of spring. For spring touches the surface of water by ways incredibly delicate and almost indecipherable; those faint reflections of a sky that knows it first and instantly passes it on.

The life of this lake, I always think, increases as it leaves Geneva and sweeps round towards the mountains and the entrance to the Rhone Valley. The town itself, scorched in summer, and desolated in winter by the icy *bise noire* that sucks down through



G. R. Ballance.

LIMONE, LAKE GARDA.

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the trough of the long curve from Lausanne, cutting like broken glass, presents itself to my imagination as the point where the Rhone escapes only too gladly. Even the sea-birds prefer the Chillon end. The trees themselves grow more vital and independent towards the eastern tip; near the town they are too saturated with the heavy affairs of men to be more than half alive, and the shores where they stand in rather sorry patches to drink seem formal, killed by concrete and stone walls. One of these Geneva trees, however, has tried to escape! Everyone, as the train leaves Villeneuve coming west, must have seen that single unhappy little tree, wasted and alone,

that stands upon its island of concrete walls a little east of Chillon, out some distance in the lake. Wizen and half terrified, bereft of all shelter or companionship of its kind, it grows there pluckily among the stress of wind and water, as though one night it had tried to escape, had flown down the whole length of the lake towards the mountain forests, been suddenly discovered and—fixed there for the term of its natural life at hard labour. I should like to raise a fund to transplant that plucky little tree into some big mountain wood where it would be looked after by its kind, and know its last days spent in comfort and companionship.

## AGRICULTURAL NOTES.

### AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

MR. REW, who is now responsible for the official agricultural statistics, has had the good fortune to present the most satisfactory set of figures that have been printed for some years. The reduction of land under cultivation only amounts to twenty-eight thousand three hundred and thirteen acres, and this is easily accounted for by the encroachment made by the towns upon the country and the consequent absorption of farm land into building land. No doubt, in the course of this operation, a number of small holdings are swallowed up; but, nevertheless, the total number of schedules returned shows an increase of five hundred and forty-two, so that, in Mr. Rew's words, "the sub-division of farms indicated by the returns must have been even greater than the actual figures show." We are reminded, however, of the fact that this sub-division in England is an artificial movement, because in Scotland, where they have not yet obtained a Small Holdings Act, no fewer than one hundred and ninety-four holdings have disappeared. The shrinkage in Scotland is due to economic causes, the increase in England to legislative stimulation.

Another factor in the statistics will be greatly welcome, and this is the increase of the agricultural areas in Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Essex, showing that land which had gone out of cultivation in these counties has now been brought back to it. Closely allied to the increase in small holdings is the increase in the quantity of land devoted to fruit. In 1907, eighty-two thousand one hundred and seventy-five acres were under small fruit, the corresponding figures in 1908 being eighty-four thousand eight hundred and eighty, and in 1909 eighty-seven thousand one hundred and sixteen. Orchards of apples, pears, cherries and plums continue also to show a steady if not very rapid increase. The acreage under them in 1907 was two hundred and fifty thousand one hundred and seventy-six, in 1908 it was two hundred and fifty thousand two hundred and ninety-seven, and in 1909, two hundred and fifty-one thousand three hundred and thirty-six. The great increase in small fruit seems to be due to the extended cultivation of strawberries, considerable additions to land under this crop being made in Kent, Cambridge, Norfolk and Hampshire. The addition of one thousand one hundred and seventy-eight acres to the area of orchards in Kent may probably be ascribed to the planting of fruit trees in place of the now discredited hop. A part of the statistics to which attention will be most eagerly directed is that which gives an account of the livestock in the United Kingdom. We hear of the shrinkage in the number of horses, but it does not come out in the figures, as there was actually a slight increase in 1909 as compared with 1908, though it is noteworthy that the increase occurred mainly in the class returned as "horses used for agricultural purposes, which includes also mares kept for breeding." The number of these was the highest recorded, the total reaching one million one hundred and thirty-two thousand and fourteen, or twelve thousand six hundred and ninety more than in 1908. Mr. Rew warns us, however, not to congratulate ourselves too warmly on these figures. During the years 1903-6 the number of foals returned seemed to show that a slight impetus was given to horse-breeding, and hence the increased number of older horses now on the farms. The best index to the state of the horse supply is the number of horses under one year, and here, unfortunately, we have alike in England and Wales a decrease, and a very slight increase in Scotland. Mr. Rew's comment is that, "however regarded, the figures suggest that the breeding of horses, in England especially, is now tending to decline." The military authorities ought to take note of the fact.

The number of cattle in Great Britain is the highest on record. In 1906 the total exceeded seven millions. For the next two years there was a drop, and then in 1909 a total of seven million and twenty thousand nine hundred and eighty-two. The most striking feature in the returns is the steady increase in cows and heifers in milk or in calf. This points to the deduction that the supply of fresh milk is one of the most important branches of farming. Mr. Rew thinks that the increased production of milk

leads to a reduction of cheese and butter making. Milk as an article of diet is in growing demand, and the business of the dairy-farmer is likely to be for many years an assured one. The total number of sheep returned was recorded as twenty-seven millions six hundred and eighteen thousand four hundred and nineteen, the highest recorded since 1892 and nearly half a million more than last year. Probably there will be a decrease next year, as the crop of lambs during the present season is a short one. The question of pigs is at the present moment of the very highest interest, as bacon, a very popular article of consumption, has increased enormously in price during the last few months. The returns show that up to June there had been a shrinkage of 15.7 per cent., and this decrease is "generally attributed by the collecting officials to the enhanced price of offals, corn and other food-stuffs." Mr. Rew produces figures to show that the quantity of pigs in this country is subject to oscillation, so that he does not consider there is anything abnormal in the present scarcity.

### LUCERNE—A REMINDER.

ONCE more the time for sowing lucerne is close at hand, and there must be many farmers who have read eulogistic articles about this king of forage plants and at least partly resolved to try it. I can assure them they cannot do a wiser thing, and this is to jog the memory of those who have formed such an intention. Full instructions for cultivation have been given in these pages, but they will bear brief repetition at the actual time of sowing. The first week in April is the best time. The land should have been well manured and cleaned in the autumn, but not ploughed in the spring, a fine seed-bed being most important. Drill or sow broadcast fully twenty pounds of seed per acre. I have never seen a crop too thick. If it well covers the ground it will not require hoeing, as it will then smother all weeds. Never keep it grazed down by sheep, but let the crop grow to its full weight and then mow three times a year. It will root three feet deep in any loose subsoil such as marl or gravel, and surface manuring seems to have little effect. Calcareous soils suit it best, but it is not very particular on this point. If no land has been specially prepared, some that has been got ready for mangolds would do well.

### SWINE FEVER.

It seems that at last we are to have a regular Departmental Committee of enquiry into the nature of swine fever, the means by which it is spread, and the best way of dealing with it. Many months ago the Central Chamber asked that this should be done, but the Board of Agriculture had just then started some new regulations, and naturally wished to try their efficacy. Since they were adopted the number of outbreaks have decreased, but this may have been partly owing to the great decline in the number of our stocks, as well as to the more extensive use of the powers of slaughter possessed by the Board. The farmers have become a little impatient of the long-continued restrictions, and bacon-curers are clamouring for something to be done, as the present scarcity and dearth of pigs touches them in a very tender place. Altogether, it seems wise to grant an enquiry, even if the authorities fail to learn anything new on this tiresome subject. They will at least make it manifest that they are trying their best, and any grievances arising from the methods of administration can be ventilated and perhaps removed. It is curious to observe that the disease has been reduced to a minimum in Ireland.

### FAULTY SEED-CORN AND CLOVER SEED.

There will be some danger of thin plant this spring if farmers neglect to try their seed-corn before planting. Not only was much barley and other corn seriously damaged in the fields last harvest, but a very great deal was heated in the stack, thereby losing its germinating power. Naturally, many will say, "Oh, this will do for seed, if it is sown a little thicker than usual," but the question is, "How much thicker?" Nothing can be more simple or easier than to count out one hundred grains, sow them in a flower-pot and place in a gentle hot-bed or in a warm room. If only half the seeds come up it is easy to see that four bushels of barley should be drilled instead of two bushels. The clover seed is very bad indeed this year, and should be tested carefully before use, and, if possible, before purchase. The whole question of seed-corn deserves more study than is usually given to it. There are many new varieties of all three cereals on the markets, and it would be well if farmers who try them would give the results of their experience in their correspondence with the agricultural Press. A very special interest attaches to the varieties derived from the new system of cross-fertilisation.

A. T. M.

### DEARER CHEESE.

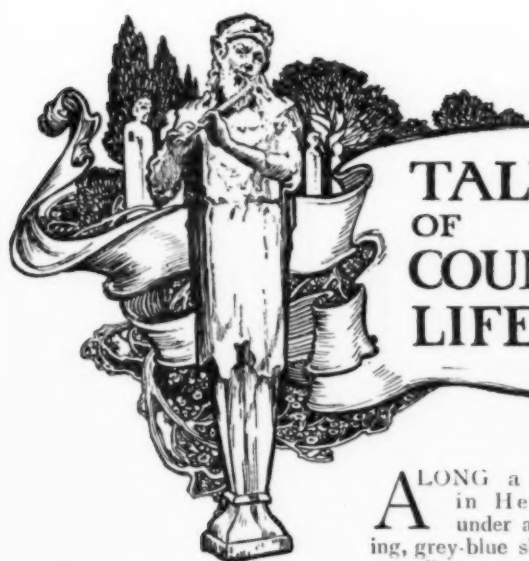
On all hands we hear of increased prices for provisions. We all know eggs are dearer, bacon is dearer, and now, seemingly, Cheddar cheese is to be dearer. There are few things so difficult to obtain as the real price made by a farmer of his crop of cheese. But in the West of England there is an official index that tells which way the market is trending; that is the prices of the cheese made at the Somerset County Cheese School.

E. W.

*F. J. Mortimer.**A LANDSCAPE IN HOLLAND.*

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## TALES OF COUNTRY LIFE.

## THE BEAGLES AND MR. DINKSON. BY JOHN BARNETT.



**A** LONG a muddy lane in Hertfordshire, under an ever-changing, grey-blue sky, a man was propelling a rather unwilling bicycle. He had not the least doubt as he gazed about him, in the rare interludes when the bicycle did not require actual coercion, that spring was coming at last. The sky suggested it, the hedgerows shyly hinted at it, and the wind, the sweet, damp, tender wind, was clamorous of its approach. Also—also, if he had had any lingering doubts about it, they would have been dispelled by a certain tingling leap in his blood that came at the sight of a slim figure far ahead. Two very hackneyed lines came to his mind concerning spring and a young man's fancy—but he checked the quotation sharply.

Who was he to talk or think of young men, or—or the foolish dreams and fancies of youth? Surely a man of forty and—a bit had done with such frivolities? Of course he had!—no one knew it better than Archibald Dinkson, when in his sober senses. And yet—and yet somehow that girl Di Sinclair had made him feel oddly, almost uncomfortably, young again of late. . . . And hang it, he wasn't so very old! He was quite sure he did not look his age. A man *ought* to thicken out, as he came to his full strength. And he wasn't past beagling yet, or anything else, whatever that conceited young ass Bellamy had dared to hint to Miss Sinclair the other day!

Grinning puppy! Archibald Dinkson set his teeth, until his jolly, good-tempered face looked almost grim, and swore by all his gods that he would prove that very day that he could still hold his own with any man. And when he had sworn that oath, his face relaxed, the corners of his mouth creased whimsically, and he muttered in another tone, "I only hope I shan't make a middle-aged fool of myself."

The white farmhouse looked cosy and comfortable among the green rolling pastures, with its old-fashioned projecting windows and its cluster of dark farm-buildings. Somnolent, rich-coated cattle were chewing lazily among the straw, and a covered cart had just pulled up in the yard. From it came eager, restless whimpers. As Archibald dismounted from his bicycle the tail of the cart was opened, and a wave of beagles descended, a living, clamorous cascade of red and white and yellow. They knew the business before them as well as, or better than, anyone, and consented to be formed up, with much whip-cracking, in squatting, tongue-drooping array to await the Master.

Mr. Dinkson, almost a novice at the game, watched the great man approach, accompanied by three or four whips. It struck him that they all looked very much like going, in their white breeches and white shoes. The Master walked into the midst of the welcoming pack, and gave a word to a few favourites. Cheerful and Charm and Restless responded almost too effusively to his greeting. He had a special word for a certain staid old white lady called Priestess, with the truest nose in the pack. He knew, none better, that she would puzzle out the line with patient cunning, when he himself and whips and the other hounds were all at fault. But Mr. Dinkson knew nothing of that, of course. He found himself daring to speculate profanely as to whether the Master *really* knew the name of each hound, or if he was only bluffing? He was inclined himself to think that he was bluffing. They all looked so much alike. Never mind!—they were very nice little dogs. He hoped it was not going to rain. A man, any man, whatever his age, was so apt to get rheum—neuralgia if he got wet. He wondered where Miss Sinclair had disappeared to—and young Bellamy? Hulloa!—there, by all the gods, was old Jarman coming towards him! What on earth was he doing at this sort of game? Mr. Dinkson would have thought that he was long past it! . . . On reflection, as he and Jarman had been at school together, there couldn't be very much difference. . . .

Archibald Dinkson, on the whole, was rather inclined to welcome the sight of his old friend. He would keep him in countenance, whatever happened. Mr. Jarman greeted Archibald warmly, and, with a subtle reference to old brown sherry, led him within the farmhouse.

Within that hospitable abode Mr. Dinkson encountered Miss Sinclair. He told himself that she was looking even prettier than usual in her cap and short tweed skirt. Hang it, mused Archibald, patriotically, no woman in the world can touch our English girls for clean, healthy daintiness! And how her pretty grey eyes lit up when she smiled, as she did directly she saw him! Mr. Dinkson trusted that the clean-built youth hovering at Di Sinclair's elbow had been duly annoyed by that smile! She came towards him at once. "Good afternoon, Mr. Dinkson," she said. "I am awfully glad you have turned out for the last meet. It is only your second time out, isn't it?"

"That is all, and the first was blank," answered Mr. Dinkson, more intoxicated by that smile than by two glasses of old brown sherry. "I took your advice and came again. You look very business-like, Miss Sinclair."

She smiled down at her tweed skirt.

"I only hope we shall have a good run!" she said.

"And so do I," agreed Mr. Dinkson, with the utmost warmth. But he was a conscientious man in the main, and he could not help asking himself, with a little shame, if he had spoken the strict truth. Was it not more true, he reflected, that he was relying—a little—on the fact that beagles often have blank days? Well, a man could only do his best, whatever happened! Mr. Dinkson trusted that some of our grand old English pluck and grit lived in him yet, to be called on at need. He also remembered gratefully, with some relief, the shortness of the beagles' legs. . . .

Archibald followed the rest into the open air. Only a small field was out—perhaps a dozen in knickerbockers and four or five girls in serviceable tweed. All these looked as though they meant serious running, and there were, besides, one or two quite elderly men and a few children of surprisingly tender years. It appeared that extremes met at beagling. On almost every face there was to be noticed a suggestion of grim resolve. Since it was the final meet, the most must surely be made of it. That day at least there should be no shirking or skilful nicking. Where the hounds went all would strive to follow, though their lungs be bursting and their feet like clogging lead. That day at least each would refuse firmly to cut across the wide circle when the hare had been viewed by the watchers on the hill, and all could see the line to which the steady, plodding hounds must swing. Such resolves are easy—while one is still unblown!

The Master raised his hand, and led the way briskly across the paddock, with the pack at his heels. Then through a gate into a large grass field, where the hounds shot out before him in a busy fan. The whips spread out behind them, directing and encouraging, and the field followed on at their leisure. Most of them seemed to know each other, and there was pleasant chaff among the scattered groups. Jarman, Archibald, Miss Sinclair and young Bellamy were together. Mr. Dinkson felt that so far beagling was a most pleasant sport. The turf was rather wet; but that was a trifle, after all. No sign of a hare so far. If nothing more happened than this, he felt he could hold his own with anyone. Miss Sinclair was in an exceedingly gracious mood; seemed, in fact, quite anxious to chat with him. Young Bellamy was reduced to walking on ahead, with sulkiness apparent in the swing of his shoulders. Archibald told himself, with slight complacency, that a man of—of experience *must* be better worth talking to than any mere callow boy! He was very pleased with the world. Even the smell of the damp turf struck him as a most goodly thing. . . . The grey clouds were moving lazily across the dim blue sky, and for a while the light

was dull and heavy. There was something almost spectral and menacing about that fringe of gaunt bare elms in the far distance. Perhaps they had been wrong about the spring; perhaps it was not coming after all? The air was harsh and wintry. . . . And then suddenly the sun gleamed out, gilding the world!

There was no longer any menace or gloom about the elms. Soon enough small, delicate, green leaves would soften their jagged threatening spear-heads, and to the music of their rustle the fairies would dance quadrilles upon the springy turf beneath the moon. And now the air was soft as velvet. The sun, Archibald reflected, was a marvellous magician. Beneath its soft, bright rays the grass was of a tender vivid green, and he was just drawing Miss Sinclair's attention to the wonderful old gold of a distant stack—when he was startled by a strident yell!

A big hare had jumped up behind the hounds, and was coming straight back to the field. The pack must have almost walked over it. The field opened out to let it go by. It flashed past within ten yards of Archibald, and headed straight for the farmhouse. A fresh unblown hare is a wonderful mover. With the drive of her great hind legs she covers the ground surprisingly. Archibald watched her go past with a humane, indulgent eye. He had no wish to see the poor thing killed; he mused, indeed, that he should like to see her get right away! And certainly it appeared to him that the beagles would have little chance against her. He did not realise that the hare, alas for her prospects of life, is only a sprinter. She has no staying power.

The field waited while the pack was brought back along the line with much objurgation and cracking of whips. Archibald watched them silently approach with wistful, eager faces low down upon the turf. Ah! now! . . . Priestess had it! . . . And the rest! Her whimper was drowned in a quick, hungry clamour, and the pack shot out from a thick cluster into a column, as the fastest hounds took the lead. They made a brave picture as they dashed past, with the glint of the sun upon their glossy coats, and the whips running easily and springily behind them. Now the field took up the running. Mr. Dinkson reflected that hounds moved *rather* faster than he had expected, but not absurdly fast. He buttoned his coat and pulled his cap on firmly; he felt, as he began to trot beside Jarman, Miss Sinclair and young Bellamy, that he would have need of all his wind.

They breasted the slope towards the farmhouse, and found that the hare had swung to the right. Scent seemed to be good, for hounds were running steadily. At first the going was light over firm turf, and even Mr. Dinkson had the superb feeling that he could run for hours at this pace. But the next field was clayey, low-lying and most slippery. Archibald Dinkson, with one foot sliding back as the other advanced, recognised with indignation that the labour was most unfairly doubled. He began to think that in truth he would have to call upon all his grand old English pluck. He was breathing rather stertorously, and that clayey field was apparently interminable. However, young Bellamy and Miss Sinclair were only a few yards ahead of him. He comforted himself with the theory that they looked as though they would welcome a check. He had no doubt at all concerning his own feelings on this point.

The field ended at last, but Mr. Dinkson, having broken callously through a low hedge without attempting to rise at it, gave an audible groan as he saw before him a dark plough sloping steeply upwards. Against the brown earth the white pack and the breeches of the whips were gleaming, and he must surely follow if he would keep his oath. Some few of the cunning runners turned sharply to the right, but Miss Sinclair and young Bellamy had never swerved, and Archibald and Jarman, neck and neck, and running slightly jealous, followed them with fine courage. Next moment they were well on, or rather *in*, the plough. . . . Archibald was amazed at his own endurance. He had a piece of soil weighing several pounds attached to each boot, and yet he was still running. So was Mr. Jarman. There can be at times little distinction, save in honour, between a run and a brisk walk. . . . Young Bellamy and Miss Sinclair had drawn away, perhaps a hundred yards ahead. What, gasped Mr. Dinkson to himself, is a mere hundred yards, one way or the other? He glanced at Jarman, and was quite shocked by the spectacle of his distress. If he had possessed sufficient breath he would have liked to warn his old friend against the worse than folly of continuing to run—at his age. But in a moment he was thinking only of his own sufferings. This plough was killing him by inches—nay, by yards! . . . Oh, thank goodness, here was a fence at last, and green grass beyond it. And the hounds had checked!

Mr. Dinkson mopped his dripping brow, and wondered if a mouthful of neat whisky was a good or bad thing for the wind. He decided to risk it. So did Mr. Jarman. Archibald at this point was actually commanded to "steady" quite fiercely by a fussily-officious Field-Master. He was rather pleased by the injunction, although not for a moment had he proposed to press the hounds or to start running again before it was actually necessary. But it seemed to be a tribute to his fiery keenness.

He could scarcely be looking as mortally exhausted as he felt. . . . He gazed quite patronisingly in consequence at Mr. Jarman; told himself once again that the dear old chap was *out of place* at this sort of thing. Mr. Dinkson doubted very strongly if Mr. Jarman had ever been told to "steady"! . . . He inflated his chest, and, striving to breathe less noisily, looked around for Miss Sinclair. . . . Oh, Lord! that annoying old lady Priestess had worried out the scent, and hounds were off once more.

A long grass field sloped down before them, and it was a godsend after that heavy, killing plough. Mr. Dinkson shut off steam, as it were, and permitted his weight to take him down the slope. But he was beginning to roll a trifle, when they reached a long stretch of marshy waste land, and hounds were mercifully again at fault. If they could have heard and understood Mr. Dinkson's fervent unspoken prayers that they would take their time over recovering scent, I am sure the hardest-hearted beagle would have been moved to pity! As it was, they wandered to and fro in puzzled fashion, and the field, not unthankfully, made what use they could of the breathing space. They were in a valley, and soon enough there came a shrill whistle from the hill. The hare had been viewed by one of the cunning people waiting above, and the Master gathered the pack with a note of his horn and led them towards the line.

They were upon it again, but apparently scent had failed a trifle. Hounds held to it, but the pace had fallen off. All the same, it was enough, and more than enough, for Mr. Dinkson. I give his reflections, punctuated by gasps: "Will *not* give in, but this is awful! Miss Sinclair and young B. more than a field away. Can't help it, really, if they are! Have heard beagling described as a cruel sport. So it is—most emphatically! But not for the hare! Should think *she* is in next county by now, judging by the pace she started at. Oh, if I live through this, without actually disgracing myself, may I be—tarred and feathered if I ever come beagling again! Don't know which is worse—the actual running, or the climbing heavily over and through hedges. Both dreadful. Am beginning to reel and stagger like an overriden but splendidly courageous horse. My trot is dying, dying, dying away!"

It was at this crisis that old Jarman, bent almost double, ranged heavily alongside his exhausted friend. "No—good—trying—to—run—straight!" he gasped. "Follow—me!" Archibald obeyed him quite mechanically. He would have followed *anyone* at the moment. He felt depressed and more than his full age. Jarman turned sharply to the right, and led the way at a walk for, perhaps, a quarter of a mile. Then he halted and motioned to Mr. Dinkson to take a seat upon a gate. That gentleman duly seated himself beside his friend and handed him his flask.

Meanwhile, hounds had plunged across another cruel stretch of plough. The panting field tailed off, and the pack left astern all but one even of the whips. When the Master made up ground again, he found that hounds were at fault and another hare had been viewed. But the whip who was up was confident that she was fresh and not their quarry. He explained his views, between gasps, to the Master, and while they discussed the question there was a yell. A hare had got up from quite near and doubled away to the right. Before hounds could be got on, she was out of sight again. But there was no doubt that she was the quarry. There is a pathetic difference between a fresh and an exhausted hare. This one's coat was matted, her ears were laid back, and there was little spring in her gallop. As hounds hit off the line with a bloodthirsty chorus, some few of the field were conscious of a secret hope that so plucky a hare might yet escape. And for a while it seemed that she might. She led the pack a pretty dance across a long, heavy stretch of rushy land. Master, whips and field dropped panting behind once more.

For perhaps ten minutes Archibald and Mr. Jarman had retained their seats upon that grateful gate. Then suddenly there broke upon their ears the "Yow! yow! yow!" of hounds. Here they were! And what was that tragic object just before the pack? The hare! Great Diana, the hare! Mr. Dinkson, naturally a most humane man, became suddenly a savage. He hailed Mr. Jarman as a magician. Together they sprang from the gate and joined madly in the chase, ahead of the Master, whips, Miss Sinclair, young Bellamy, everyone! . . . There was a sudden piteous scream from a thick bush. . . . Mr. Dinkson and Mr. Jarman were in at the death!

There was no doubt about it, it was a triumph. Somehow, without descending to actual falsehood, they got the credit of having run straight. Mr. Dinkson, with becoming modesty, accepted a pad from the Master and charming congratulations from Miss Sinclair. He had shown them, he reflected, that there was life in the—well, moderately old dog yet. It was delightful to think of walking home with Miss Sinclair through the long, slanting evening shadows. . . . But—a sudden tardy sanity returned to Archibald Dinkson. He looked around and saw young Bellamy and Miss Sinclair side by side. . . . After all, two are company, and—and it would be rather painful to feel



yourself the third! Better to play the game, in spite . . . Oh, good! Here was faithful old Jarman holding out his pouch. Friendship and tobacco, more trustworthy than the love of women, were still left to him. . . .

The red sun was drooping low as they tramped homewards. The shadows were gathering fast, but all the west was a glory of

pink and gold. And so together along the pleasant darkening lanes, beneath the grim, bare trees, talking cheerily of that great run, regardless of the chill in the air, because of the promise of spring that the day had brought. And I quite think that both of them will be out with the beagles next season. But I am sure they will have the sense to "run cunning."

## IN THE GARDEN.

### DWARF PLANTS FOR FLOWER-BEDS.

**E**ARLY spring is the time to make notes for future planting, and at this season those who care for their gardens should be thinking out future work. One point which frequently produces a discordant note during winter and spring is the large expanse of bare soil in shrubberies and thinly planted beds of shrubs. This, however, may be obviated to a large extent by carpeting the ground with plants which are not of rank growth. In selecting subjects it is always advisable to choose those which bloom and mature their growth early, for then the dead leaves may be cleared away before many weeds appear and before the majority of shrubs are in flower. Daffodils are bad plants for the shrubbery, for the foliage is coarse and does not die down until midsummer. Small-growing plants do not rob the ground so seriously, while, if they are kept at a little distance from the shrubs, they do not interfere much with them. Rings which are kept free from grass round the bases of trees may also have a carpet of bulbous plants, for they do not keep away moisture from the roots of the trees as in the case of a thick mat of turf. In addition to being beautiful in themselves, some of these carpeting plants are valuable on account of the contrast they give to early-flowering shrubs in the same bed, and in planting consideration should be given to possibilities in this direction.

The earliest effects are those produced by Snowdrops and Winter Aconites, which may be used separately or in combination, the display in either case being effective. As a groundwork for Witch Hazels, Snowdrops are delightful, the glistening white of the carpet forming a beautiful contrast to the gold of the Hamamelis. Following close on these plants are the Crocuses in mauve, white, yellow and purple, one and all combining to make an imposing display. White Crocuses used as a carpet beneath Cornus Mas are well worth trying; while yellow or mauve varieties surrounding a tree of *Prunus davidiana alba* are effective. Crocuses are perhaps the best of the dwarf bulbous plants to naturalise in grass, for they continue to thrive and increase in grass that is mown regularly with heavy machines from the time the leaves die down until late autumn, an operation which a great many plants would not long survive.

Blue flowers are introduced by the various *Chionodoxa* and *Scillas*, and what glorious displays they make, the different shades of colour being particularly pleasing. For carpeting beds of *Forsythias* or *Magnolia stellata* they are specially attractive, the latter shrub being peculiarly appropriate for a groundwork of blue, the white blossoms forming an admirable contrast. Good kinds to plant are *Chionodoxa Luciliae* and its varieties *sardensis* and *gigantea*, and *Scillas bifolia* and *sibirica*. *Brodiaea uniflora* is well adapted for making a carpet of flowers, and is

suitable for a position about the base of a young tree. A charming blue-flowered bulbous plant is *Muscari botryoides*, while the form called Heavenly Blue is specially worthy of note. This increases amazingly, and may be lifted and divided every three or four years.

Turning from the strictly bulbous plants, we find others with corms or underground stems which are well worth using. The hardy *Cyclamens* form charming groups, and are effective

by reason of their richly marbled foliage and rosy purple flowers. With a selection of several kinds flowers may be had from autumn until late spring. Such kinds as *cilicicum*, *Coum*, *europæum*, *ibericum*, *libanoticum* and *neapolitanum* are all attractive. These well repay a little trouble, the colour of the flowers being different from that of most dwarf-growing plants suitable for the same purpose. In addition to being of service for carpeting beds, *C. Coum* may be planted in grass where it is short and the ground of a more or less spongy character.

Anemones naturally demand attention for the purpose under notice, and nothing can be more beautiful than the graceful inflorescences of some of the kinds. The common Windflower (*Anemone nemorosa*) is delightful, whether seen growing wild, carpeting a wood or plantation, or planted as an undergrowth to a bed in the garden. In addition to the type there are several varieties which are of value, such as *flore pleno* and *robinsoniana*, the former being remarkable for its double flowers and the latter for its finely-formed and large blooms. The common *Hepatica* (*A. H. patica*) is well known, and is charming in early spring when carrying large quantities of flowers. A considerable variation in colour is noticeable, for there are

forms with blue, white and red flowers. A species of *Anemone* with pretty blue flowers is *A. apennina*; it is quite dwarf and makes an admirable "carpet." *A. ranunculoides* is a yellow-flowered Windflower, which is a decided change from other sorts; it is worth planting beneath a white-flowered tree. *A. Pulsatilla* (the Pasque-flower) is charming when growing vigorously in a shady place.

It is by thinking out such effects as this that our gardens are made both beautiful and interesting. W. D.

### THE COMMON HONEYSUCKLE.

AMONG the many beautiful and fragrant flowers that are found growing wild in this country, none appeals to the imagination more strongly than the common Woodbine, or Honeysuckle. Indeed, so highly are the beauty and fragrance of its clusters of long, tubular flowers prized that it frequently finds a place in the best gardens in the country. Under cultivation it produces its masses of pale golden and crimson blossoms in profusion, and easily holds its own with the choicest of hardy flowering shrubs, the illustration affording a good example of its capabilities. The Honeysuckle appreciates



S. Jepson. A BOWER OF SHINING GREEN & GOLD. Copyright.



deeply-worked and well-mannered soil, but drainage must be good. For clothing pillars, pergolas, trellis, or even the bare trunks of old trees it is an excellent plant. There is still time to put in a specimen or two, and most nurserymen are able to supply these, either in pots or lifted from the open ground. The only drawback to its culture in the garden is that it frequently gets badly attacked by insects during hot weather; but these can be kept in check by spraying with a simple insecticide.

#### ST. DABROC'S HEATH.

Strictly speaking, this charming little low-growing evergreen shrub is not a Heath, but very closely allied to the family, thriving under similar conditions to the hardy Heaths. It is wild in Ireland, and is often known as the Irish Heath, its botanical name being *Daboecia polifolia*. It is strange that such a charming little flowering shrub as this is so seldom met with in gardens, as it is not difficult to grow providing the soil is well drained and a good proportion of coarse peat is added before planting is done. For the front part of the shrub border, or even for filling a lawn bed where a low-growing, permanent plant is required, the Irish Heath, or one of its varieties, is excellent. In the case of the shrub border a good-sized clump should be planted, as this will prove far more effective than a solitary specimen. It forms a tuft-like shrub about one foot high, and its rather small, drooping, globular flowers are usually present for several months during summer. The colour of these is dull rose or red. Some nurserymen, however, offer a pure, glistening white-flowered variety known as *D. polifolia alba*, and this is a delightful little shrub. *D. p. bicolor* produces both red and white flowers, but the effect of these is not pleasing. Now is a good time for planting the Irish Heath, and all who appreciate unusual shrubs should find room for a plant or two in their gardens.

#### SOME BEAUTIFUL DOGWOODS.

During the latter part of February and early in March, just at the time when the golden beauty of the Witch Hazels is waning, the Cornelian Cherry, or Cornel (*Cornus mas*), opens its small, curious yellow flowers. It forms a strong-growing, spreading bush some fifteen feet to twenty feet high, and, like other members of the family, will thrive in almost any garden soil. *Cornus alba*, a native of Northern Asia, is the white-fruited Dogwood, and is appreciated chiefly for the red colour of the bark, which forms a conspicuous feature in the winter landscape. Two excellent varieties of it are in commerce, viz., *C. a. Spathii* and *C. a. sibirica variegata*, both being grown for the sake of their foliage, which is very handsome during late spring and summer. The first-named has beautiful golden variegated leaves, and those of the latter have a silvery colouring. Both these varieties are ideal plants for filling large beds on lawns, and several examples of the plants grown in this way may be seen in the Royal Gardens, Kew. It will be necessary in the case of plants in beds to occasionally shorten back the growths to keep them within bounds, and this should be done in late winter and spring by cutting the encroaching shoots right to their bases; a clipping over of all the shoots ought never to be done, or the shrubs lose all their natural grace and beauty. Almost any soil that has been well dug will suit these two ornamental Dogwoods. They may be planted about three feet apart each way any time in late autumn or early spring.

#### LITTLE-KNOWN FORMS OF THE ROSEMARY.

Rosemary is one of those plants which were cultivated in the earliest English gardens, and when we consider this fact it is surprising that more varieties of it have not been brought into existence. It has always been a favourite, yet there appear to have been few attempts to secure distinct and new varieties of it. It is possible that most of those who grow this sweet-scented evergreen shrub prefer it in its original and simple form, yet there are several deviations from the normal that have their own peculiar charm and usefulness. One of these is the so-called golden-leaved Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis aurea*), a counterpart of the type, except that the leaves have a golden tint. The most useful variety of all is *prostrata*, a half-creeping plant, which has rather smaller leaves than the type and is excellent for the rock garden. Planted above a large mass of stone the growths will soon overhang it and form a fragrant bank of green. A very erect variety which makes fine specimen bushes for isolated positions is that known as Miss Jessop's Upright Rosemary. It makes a much better shaped plant than the original shrub, and yet has the fragrance and vigour of its parent. The present is a good time to plant these old-fashioned shrubs, but to ensure success in their culture a well-drained site should be chosen, and the soil, if not already so, must be made of a sandy character. Given these and a sunny spot, the Rosemary will thrive for many years without attention.

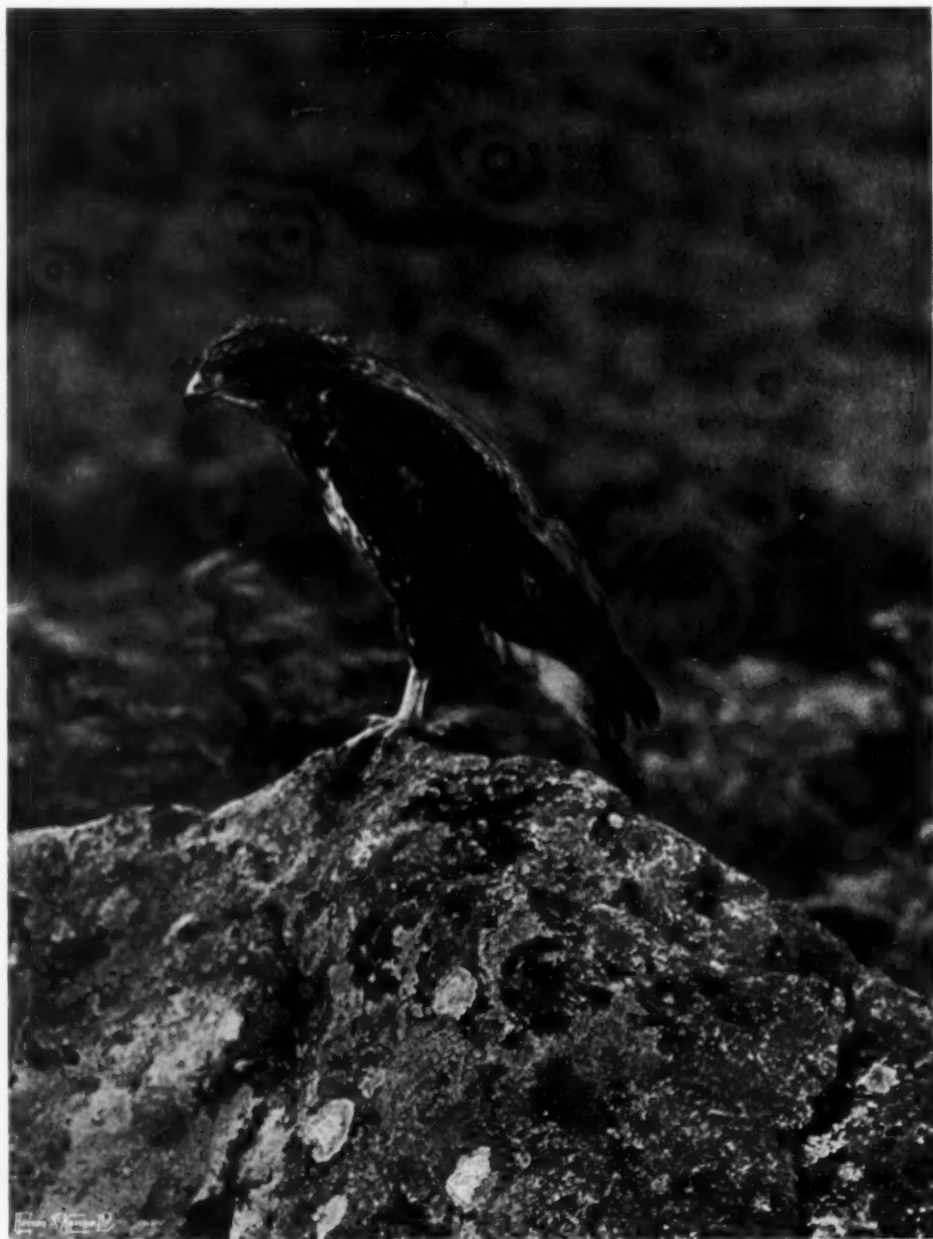
#### SOME BEAUTIFUL BERBERIS HYBRIDS.

Among the many shrubs which flower abundantly in spring none is appreciated

more than the Barberry known as *Berberis stenophylla*. In addition to its flowering character, the narrow, rich green leaves are retained through the winter, and these, together with its drooping growth, render it ornamental at any time of the year. In the flowering season each slender branch is clothed with rich, golden yellow flowers, and may be likened to an arched streamer of golden bells. Such a useful shrub as this has naturally received attention from the hybridist, with the result that there are several distinct forms of it obtainable. The most beautiful of all is that known as *corallina*, a name it derives from the colour of the flower-buds. These are a decided coral red, or in some instances scarlet, and, although the flowers are yellow when fully expanded, much of this colour of the buds is retained. The variety *gracilis* is worthy of attention, owing to its habit of producing flowers in autumn as well as in spring. There are few autumn-flowering shrubs, and one that does bloom then as well as earlier in the year is an acquisition. It is of graceful, arching growth, and a shrub that should be in all good gardens. *Erecta* is a small, upright-growing variety with pale green spiny leaves. It is suitable for planting in positions where larger-growing kinds cannot be accommodated. *Irwinii* is another dwarf variety, the rather arching stems growing closely one above the other. All these varieties or hybrids will thrive under similar conditions to the type, and provide a pleasing variation in the large family of *Berberises*. II.

## THE BUZZARD AND HIS HOME.

It was a bright sunny day in early spring when I first looked upon the buzzard in his own wild home. A beautiful and picturesque valley stretched before me. On either side there rose up mighty grey rocks, covered here and there with patches of green. Below me there ran a bubbling stream, its music rippling along the valley, in some places loud and deep as the tumbling water dashed over the large boulders; and yet



O. G. Pike.

IN PROFILE.

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a little further along it sank to almost a whisper, and then again broke out into a sweet smiling song as it danced over the small rounded stones. A dipper sat on one large rock, he "hobbled" several times, then dived into a shallow pool, and I saw him turning over the stones and searching for insects at the bottom. Huge jagged slate rocks rose from the streamside and reached up to the ivy-covered cliffs above. Near the water's edge there were numberless flowers of spring not yet open. Primroses and bluebells, bracken and a dozen others were there, only waiting for the springtime sun to open their petals and leaves. The roadway which followed the stream, and along which we were driving, was not straight for forty yards; but all this only added to its beauty. This particular spot was a magnificent picture of wild and rugged Nature, one view in an ever-changing panorama, and it was all the more interesting to me, for high up above me were six buzzards soaring. Just over the brow of a great cliff were six of these majestic birds slowly circling round and round, and yet only a few weeks before I had been wondering if I should ever look upon this noble bird, for I had read so much about his great rarity.

That was seven years ago, and each year since then I have spent several weeks in the buzzard's home; the wild grey hills appeal to me, and as surely as the spring comes round the spirit of these great hills calls me, and I have to obey. The part which I refer to is strictly protected, and the owners belong to that much to be commended and true form of British sportsmen who delight in seeing a few of our most magnificent birds of prey on their land, even if it does mean the loss of a few grouse in the course of a season. During a day's walk of twenty miles over these favoured hills I have seen as many as thirty different buzzards.

The flight of the buzzard is as well-nigh perfection as it is possible to find. In fact, he might be called the most perfect aeroplane in existence. To see him soaring between the bare hills, with a vast green fertile valley below him, and with the spring sun lighting up his brown plumage as he slowly sails round, with outspread pinions, is a sight never to be forgotten.

The buzzard usually chooses a ledge on a cliff for the eyrie; but in certain parts of Wales there are a few well-used nests in trees, and as these are generally used by some bird of prey each season, they grow to an enormous size. The buzzard does not, as a rule, use the same nest two consecutive seasons, but returns to it the third, and after that allows another season to elapse before occupying it again.

Two nests are often constructed in one dingle, and an amusing incident happened a few years ago in one of these places. The hen laid one egg in each nest, and as it was quite impossible for her to sit on both at once, we did her a good turn by placing one of the eggs in the nest with its companion. The result of our kindness was that a collector passed by about two hours afterwards and put both eggs in his collecting-box! When I thought the matter over, I came to the conclusion that that old buzzard was not half such a fool as we took her to be, and if we had left the eggs as we found



O. G. Pike.

## BACK TO EARTH.

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them, the bird might have had a chance of rearing one youngster.

I should now like to make a few remarks about a peculiar and interesting habit of the buzzard. I think I was the first to draw attention to this fact, and it has been described in my books. Certain critics, whose acquaintance with the buzzard has simply been a few rushed week-end visits to its haunt, have mentioned that this is simply a fairy-tale on my part! Now, if there is one thing upon which I pride myself, it is on only writing about birds with which I have had a personal acquaintance. My facts are always taken at first hand from Nature, and I do not embellish these statements with a few flowery ornamentations. This peculiar trait of the young buzzard I have carefully studied, and I have also had keepers and keen naturalists who live in the birds' haunt to watch the birds for me, and these, one and all, bear out my previous published statements. I think most naturalists know that the buzzard lays one egg and then sits on this for several days before laying egg number two, and so on until the third and fourth. The result, of course, is that one young buzzard arrives on the scene three or four days in advance of its brothers. I have often seen two or three young buzzards in a nest in various stages of growth, but it almost invariably happened that if I visited one of these nests a week or a fortnight later the nest contained only one. It puzzled me very much as to what happened to these youngsters, and I determined to set to work to find out, and after several seasons spent in the buzzards' home I have discovered that the strongest of the



young birds overpower their weaker companions, and then having killed them actually devour them and clear them off the scene altogether! This is the extent of my "fairy-tale," as one well-known egg-collector termed it in reviewing one of my books.

A friend of mine, a keen naturalist and Nature photographer, has watched the stronger of the two young birds overpowering its companion. I have seen and photographed the young buzzard just after it has been killed, I have also seen and photographed the remains of the dead buzzard partly eaten, and I now have in my possession the claw and leg bones of a young buzzard with the flesh partly torn away, which I took from a nest immediately after surprising the bird-cannibal at his feast. But, say my critics, a young buzzard could not devour its companions, for the parents feed their young by pulling the carcases apart for them. In answer to that I can say that I have cinematograph pictures of a buzzard, three weeks old, sitting in its eyrie and pulling a rabbit to pieces with its own unaided efforts; and if a young buzzard can tackle a rabbit, it would far easier pull to pieces the tender flesh of a brother nestling. The buzzard is certainly one of the most difficult birds I ever attempted to photograph, but my pictures of this splendid wild bird in his own wild home well repay me for my trouble. I waited on the cliffside for three days in my bird-tent, well concealed near the nest, and secured living pictures with my bioscope of this shy bird in her home, and later on in

the season I was able to get the series which illustrate this article, which also give a very good idea of the wild, open moorland and mountain which the buzzard chooses for his home.

OLIVER G. PIKE.

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### THE PTARMIGAN.

OF all our mountain birds the ptarmigan alone remains on the mountain tops in winter as well as in summer; and when all other bird-life has been compelled by the severity of the weather to descend to more sheltered quarters, the hardy ptarmigan seems almost to revel in the Arctic conditions and scorns to leave his storm-swept strongholds. For this reason he is of special interest to the ornithologist, and a day at his haunts is always worth the labours of an arduous climb, for the ptarmigan rarely descends, even during the heaviest snowstorms, below the level two thousand five hundred feet. As the writer, accompanied by a mountaineering friend, set out at daybreak for a favourite haunt of the ptarmigan, a hard frost held the whole country-side firmly in its grip, and the snow, partly thawed by a mild westerly wind on the preceding day, was frozen as hard as iron. On the lower grounds the covering was not continuous, but on the sheltered sides of the hill were deep wreaths and to our west the snow lay deep and unbroken. Passing a small lochan nestling in a birch wood we found it thickly covered with a beautiful sheet of smoothest ice, suggesting to our minds the national game of curling, for many ideal rinks could

have been marked out on the lochan's surface. Soon we passed a mountain quarry, where ample evidence pointed to the fact that a kestrel used the spot as a roosting site, and the hillside also yielded a good many grouse, some already paired, but the majority in coveys and packs. In this district during the summer months the ring-ousel or mountain blackbird is found nesting in considerable numbers, and it is a somewhat remarkable fact that ring-ousel and kestrel very often are found nesting in the same locality and living in perfect harmony together. As we passed the quarry a kestrel came across the hill flying at a good speed just above the surface of the heather, but caused no excitement among the numerous grouse in the vicinity, who were evidently accustomed to the little hawk.

### PHOTOGRAPHING THE TRACKS OF ANIMALS.

Above the one thousand feet line a thin coating of fresh snow lay everywhere, and in it were numerous tracks of mountain hares—principally leading to some springs at the head of a burn—and occasional footmarks of a fox. The photographing of the tracks of birds and animals in the snow is an exceedingly interesting branch of natural history, and very successful snap-shots can be obtained without much trouble, the only point to be borne in mind being that the exposure must, in every case, be a short one, as the snow reflects a very great amount of light, and it is almost impossible to under-expose the negatives. As we made our way up the glen the view gradually opened out and, to the south, across the valley of the Dee, the conical summit of Mount Keen (three thousand and seventy-seven feet) stood out prominently. We could not help noticing in what an exceptional way the snow had been swept off the western parts of the hill and had been deposited on the southern slope in an immense drift. Nearer at hand on a thickly wooded hillside were seen the cliffs where a couple of seasons ago a pair of golden eagles built their eyrie and endeavoured to raise their young, but, unfortunately, deserted before the eggs had been laid, owing to the fact that the inhabitants of a neighbouring village used to make excursions to the nesting site and throw down stones and sticks to ascertain whether the birds were at home or not. Considering the circumstances, it cannot be held but that the eagles were justified in leaving their new nesting site.



O. G. Pike.

THE RETURN.

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## MOUNTAIN HARES.

At length we reached the source of the burn we had been ascending, and noted that many tracks of mountain hares all led to the spring at the head of the burn, where the snow had melted and the moss was thick and green. It is on this moss that the hares feed when all the hills are deep in snow, for the spring water is always relatively warm; and the snow never lies near a spring for any length of time. Another source of food is the long rushes which stand out above the snow, except during very severe falls. Mountain hares are seemingly well adapted for wintering on the hills, for they are always in good condition, no matter how severe the weather may be, and keepers with whom we have talked on the subject have told us that they have never found a hare which had died from exposure or want of food. At a height of about two thousand feet a solitary ptarmigan rose some distance from us and flew rapidly down wind; but it was not until we had gone some distance further that we reached the true haunt of the "white grouse." The weather, which had hitherto been fine and bright, now appeared somewhat ominous. To our west the sky had a dull leaden appearance, with cold grey clouds resting on the hills behind Loch Muich and Lochnagar looking drear and ghostly with its snow-covered summit now and again hidden in forbidding "cumuli" clouds rising out of the south-west. On such a day as this the hills, with no warmth of colour to relieve them, have a curious, almost forbidding appearance, the whole scene giving one the idea of a world in which all life had been extinguished. To our east the scene was more cheerful, and on one of the lower hills near us we could make out through a glass keepers engaged in burning a strip of moorland. Winter heather-burning is rarely attempted, but is undoubtedly of great use, as the months of March and April are often the most stormy of the year, and it not unfrequently happens that mid-April—the beginning of the close season—arrives before any burning has been accomplished. Loch Davan, far beneath us, was partially ice-bound; but large waves were rolling across the exposed surface of the water, showing that a strong wind was blowing on the low grounds.

## THE DOMAIN OF THE PTARMIGAN.

We put up many mountain hares, which seemed to rival the snow in their snow white fur; but shortly after leaving the two thousand feet level the grouse flushed were now few and far between, and at length we entered the domain of the snow white ptarmigan. We first became aware of the close proximity of these birds by a deep guttural croaking proceeding from some rocky ground on our left, and careful stalking enabled us to get within a few yards of the bird and to obtain a snap-shot of him. He was crouching low on the ground, and harmonised with his surroundings in a truly remarkable manner. When he took wing the great beauty of his plumage was very obvious, a few black feathers in the tail setting off the spotless white of his wings and breast. We obtained a pretty photograph of a ptarmigan's footmarks leading through the wet snow to a small pool of water; and ample traces we found that the "fresh" of the previous day had been felt even at this altitude of close on three thousand feet, for there was practically no snow on the summit plateau, and numerous frozen pools of water showed how the snow had melted.

## GOLDEN EAGLE AND MOUNTAIN HARE.

While on this plateau in mid-June we had an exceptionally fine view of a golden eagle. The king of birds was being hotly pursued by a pair of common gulls—who were calling loudly and angrily—and pursuers and pursued passed us at a distance of only a few yards. From the summit cairn hill after hill stood out to our north and west. Due north, Ben Kinnes on Speyside was conspicuous, while further west Carn Ealasaid and the other hills at the head of the Don were clearly seen, and we could make out the hollow where the Lecht road from Corgariff to Tomintoul crosses the range at a height of more than two thousand feet above sea-level. Ben A'an (close on four thousand feet) to our westward was prominent with enormous drifts of snow on its slopes and corries, while "dark Lochnagar" was dark no longer with its mantle of snow. On crossing a burn where the snow had been drifted many feet high we saw a mountain hare suddenly appear as if from



O. G. Pike.

THE BUZZARD: "IN HIS OWN WILD HOME."

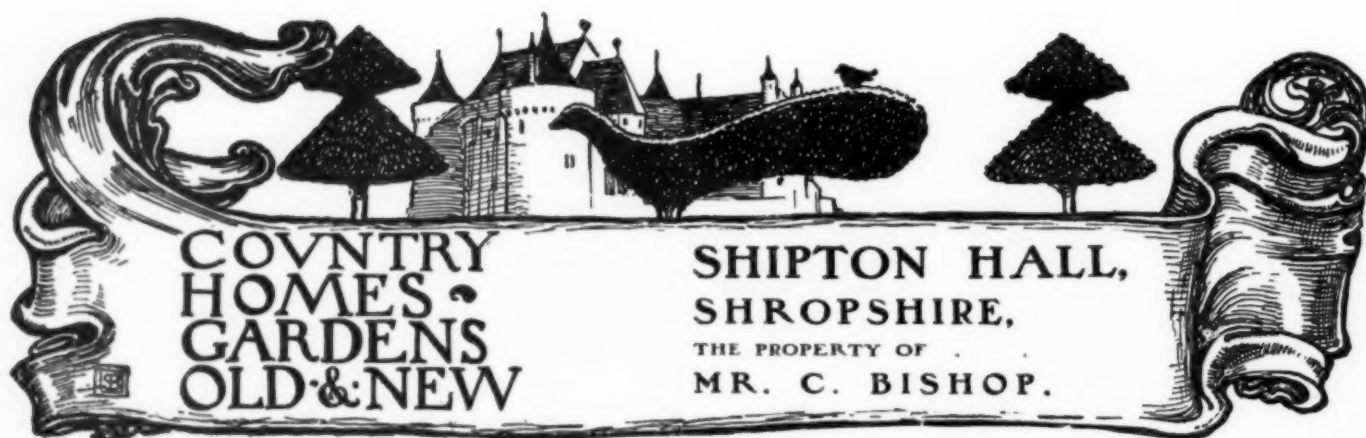
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nowhere, and dash off down the hillside. On closer examination we found a burrow in the snow extending, so far as could be ascertained, a considerable distance. The mountain hare rarely makes use of burrows, and we have never before known of a hole being tunnelled in a snow wreath, but there seemed to be no doubt that the burrow had been tunnelled by white hares, possibly as a protection against the golden eagle, which is often met with in the district and has an eyrie on a miniature precipice in the vicinity.

## A STORMY NIGHTFALL.

As we reached the lower levels of the hill walking became very difficult, the long heather being thickly covered with half-frozen snow, which, however, was not sufficiently hard to bear our weight. In the vicinity of Morven Lodge—a shooting box situated at a height of considerably over one thousand feet above sea-level—we observed the keeper making a round of inspection, accompanied by his dog. We seemed to create a favourable impression, however, for after having approached us, somewhat suspiciously, it must be admitted, he turned off to his lodge. Crossing the Leary burn—still running full as the result of the recent fresh—we soon gained the road leading to Deeside. The outlook to the west was now stormy in the extreme. Heavy clouds were descending on Lochnagar, while the sky behind them was a deep purple, and even on Mount Keen the clouds were ominous and lowering. The frost still held, and the road for the first mile was completely filled with snow, and we saw the tracks of a motor which had evidently got so far and had been forced to turn. In Glen Gairn the snow was of considerable depth, but the frost was now "leaping" and a heavy rain commenced to fall, driven by a strong south-westerly wind. The hills were shut in one by one by the heavy mist, and the gale, sighing in the birches, prophesied a night of extreme wildness for this highland glen, as we, with difficulty, made our way to our destination in less stormy quarters.

SETON GORDON.



**S**HROPSHIRE contains no more delightful old house than Shipton. Certainly it does not compare in antiquarian interest with mediæval Stokesay, which lies west of it. But then Stokesay is not an inhabited house, and could not be made to satisfy modern conditions of inhabitation without detriment. Nor is Shipton an Early Renaissance house of great size like Condover or Pitchford, which are north of it. But then Condover and Pitchford have paid for their importance by being subjected to periodic renovations and

a good deal of modernising. Shipton, on the other hand, in its modest retirement, has to a wonderful degree escaped such questionable attentions. It was, if we are to judge by its style, built by one man in the first days of the Stewart régime, and added to by another soon after the Hanoverians had replaced the earlier dynasty. Between those dates, and after the latter one, little has ever been done, and down to a few years ago, when, for the first time since its erection, it changed hands by purchase, it stood, not merely as regards its structure but also in the matter of its

fittings and furniture, as a typical example of the old-time house of a country gentleman. Then a sale scattered its homogeneous contents. Gone are the Chippendale chairs, of date about 1740, with the lower part of their scrolled slats formed into the letter M. Gone are the splendid linen bed-hangings, admirable in colour and general preservation, which a lady of the house embroidered with the massive brown stems and green leaves, interspersed with many coloured birds and flowers, which were a favourite pattern in the early part of the eighteenth century. These and a thousand other memorials of the old owners are gone, some, fortunately, being preserved by their present representative. The house is poorer by their removal, but has suffered no further harm. The new owner has carefully abstained from "restoration," and has in no wise modified the original character and features of the house. He has shown excellent judgment in going no further than necessary repairs, and these, it is greatly to be hoped, he will carefully and regularly effect throughout the cluster of buildings forming this complete habitation that comprises all those offices and outbuildings—including a great stone-tiled dovecote—that were called for by the self-sustaining habits of its seventeenth century family. That family held a name long important in the county annals. Between the times of Reginald de Mutton, M.P. for his native town of Shrewsbury under Edward III., to those of Jack Mytton of Halston, whose spendthrift habits enabled him to wreck the family fortunes and die in hiding before reaching the age of fifty, nearly five centuries had passed by, during which many a Mytton had played his part on the local and some on the national stage. One of them was Sheriff of the county at a critical moment.



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THE PORCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."





THE ASCENT TO THE SOUTH FRONT.

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We all know how Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, after being the chief agent in placing Richard III. on the throne, turned from him and raised an army in the West to march against him. But the autumn rains of 1483 so swelled Severn and Wye that his men could not cross and gradually deserted his standard. The Duke fled North to Shropshire, and a reward of one thousand pounds was set on his head. He had estates and influence in many parts of England, and to Ralph Banister,

Nov. 2nd." If we turn to Thomas Philip's "History of Shrewsbury," published in 1779, and look at the list of Sheriffs we shall find for the year 1483 the name of "John Mytton of Shipton." But the later chronicle of the town by Messrs. Owen and Blake-way informs us that this official's Christian name was properly Thomas, and that he lived at Shrewsbury, of which town he was bailiff two years later. That would not prevent his holding land at Shipton. It may be noted that the Sheriff is said to



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FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

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a man of some landed importance near Wem, and one of his "retainers," forthwith he appealed for shelter. Banister did not betray his lord, but, as the "Dictionary of National Biography" tells us, "was not above claiming the reward for giving him up when his whereabouts was discovered. His lurking place in a poor hut is said to have been betrayed by the unusual provision of victuals carried to it. He was brought to the Court at Salisbury on Nov. 1st by John Mytton the Sheriff and beheaded on

have captured the Duke at Shenwood, which is near Wenlock, and of Wenlock Abbey Shipton was one of the possessions lying a few miles to the west. The hill land of Wenlock Edge was then a forest tract, and the opposite hills of Clee must have borne the same wild character, and either will have offered good lurking-places. It may, then, have been the Sheriff's connection with Shipton which brought him news of the fugitive's whereabouts. He remained a staunch adherent of Richard III., and



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SHIPTON HALL FROM THE HIGH ROAD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE HALL AS REDECORATED IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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when two years later Henry Tudor, on his march from Wales to Bosworth, wished to pass through Shrewsbury, he failed to win the bailiff to his side, for we are told that "this stout gentleman" would acknowledge only "Kynge Rychard whose lyfftenants he and hys fellowe weare, and before he (Henry) shoulde entre there he should goe over hys belly." If he held the Shipton Manor, it must have been under the Abbot, whose socage tenants, as early as 1227, were the Mores of More House and of Larden, which were both appurtenances of the parish. More House came to be a farm, but the owners continued to make Larden Hall their home. As the result of the marriage of Thomas More of Larden, in 1795, with Harriott, daughter of Thomas Mytton of Shipton, those two estates came under one ownership in the person of their son, Robert More, whose nephew and heir, the late Mr. Jasper More (M.P. for his native county of Shropshire during much of the latter half of the nineteenth century) parted with them a century after the marriage

which had connected them. He retained, however, Linley Hall and the other More estates, which are now the property of his son, Mr. Mytton More.

Singularly little has been recorded of the Myttons of Shipton, and the volumes of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, wherein we find so full an account of the contemporary house of Wilderhope, close by, shed no light on the subject beyond telling us that Henry Mytton, the son of Edward Mytton of Shipton, was Bailiff of the Borough of Wenlock and its representative in the House of Commons in 1623. He is described as "de privato cubiculo domini Regis," and in 1663 he was buried at Shipton, where his two wives had been laid before him. This Gentleman of the Royal Bedchamber no doubt was a loyalist, and one of Charles I.'s requisitions for a loan, dated in 1643, is preserved by his descendant. On the other side was his Halston cousin, Thomas Mytton, brother-in-law and right-hand man to the chief of the local Parliamentary leaders, Sir Thomas Middleton



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THE LIBRARY MANTEL-PIECE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."





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THE LIBRARY FIREPLACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of Chirk Castle. Subsequently Thomas Mytton obtained an independent command, took Shrewsbury in 1645, and became the military head of the group of counties of which Shropshire was the centre.

From genealogical notes possessed by the family it would seem that the Mytton ownership of Shipton did not commence until James I. was King. From this source we get no confirmation of the connection of Sheriff Mytton with Shipton in the days when the Wenlock Abbot was its lord, nor with the Edward Mytton who was of Shipton before Henry the M.P. We only hear of a Thomas Mytton, whose marriage with a Corbet got him an estate at Ryton in Salop, and whose son Richard wedded Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Lutwyche of Lutwyche. Lutwyche is still a fine place, retaining many ancient features, and it lies a mile or more north of Shipton. It was probably into Lutwyche hands that Shipton fell at the Dissolution, or

soon after, for it is Richard's younger son, John, who re-edifies the chancel of Shipton church in 1589, and dies in 1615, leaving Shipton Hall to his sister's son, Edward Mytton. Five years later Edward passed away, and his son Henry, who was just of age, came into possession.

The style in which Shipton is built continued, especially in somewhat remote country places, for as long as James I. was King, and therefore Henry Mytton may well have been its builder, although it is also open to conjecture that he inherited the house from his father, Edward, and that John Lutwyche "re-edified" it as well as the chancel of the church. The site chosen was delightful. The hill land which culminates with Wenlock Edge slopes, with many an intermediate rise and fall, southward to the river Corve, to rise again on the opposite side of the Vale, where the summit of Brown Clee rears its head. The little Shipton community is set on one of the



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southward slopes which at that spot forms a hollow of amphitheatre type—protected north, east and west and open only to the south. Along the southern edge runs the road, and close by it, where the west bank begins to rise, stands the little church of the late Gothic type, although its chancel was "re-edified" when Elizabeth was Queen. In the centre of the hollow is the gate to the way that leads up to the Hall, a winding road at first sweeping round a flat grass plat, then a pathway rising by flights of steps across an enclosed garden to the house, which stands dominating the south view and sets its back to the rising ground behind. The elevation is at once typical of its time and individual to itself. It belongs to that transition type between the mediæval and the Palladian, when the old arrangement of a central hall entered at one end had to be combined with a symmetrical exterior. We have seen large houses, such as Kirby and Wiston, where this was reached by setting a porch in the centre with the hall on one side of it, and on the other side rooms on two storeys, but with windows imitating those of the lofty hall. But for houses with a narrower front the plan was invented of placing a many-mullioned hall window in the middle of the house and setting against the projecting wings two lesser excrescences, of which one might form the hall oriel and the other one the porch, entered at the side from a small terrace lying in front of the hall window and filling in the space between the projections. Dorfold in Cheshire is an example of this plan that fulfils all the requirements of absolute symmetry, while Chasleton in Oxfordshire presents the scheme rather more freely treated. Both these houses date from the reign of James I., and this gives colour to the suggestion that Shipton, which is on the same plan, was not built till then. Shipton has the plan, but the designer—no doubt a countryman to whom Vitruvius was unknown even as a name—threw symmetry to the winds. The porch excrescence has no *vis-à-vis* whatever, and, far from feeling ashamed of such libertinage, rears itself up unblushingly as a four-storeyed tower! One such riotous outbreak was enough. Every other component part of the elevation meekly obeys the laws of balance. The centre has a pair of windows to light the hall, and another pair to light the rooms above. The wings each have a two-storeyed bay. All three portions have gables pierced with windows of the pyramid type which we saw last autumn at Rushton, where, however, they were on a larger scale

and three-tiered. The three chimney-stacks that serve the house are also true to balance. One of them rises up behind the central gable, the others flank the wings. Their many-angled shafts with boldly-moulded tops are of brick set upon massive stone bases. For his chimney-shafts only did the original builder use brick. All the rest is stone—stone tiles for the roof, rubble from a quarry close by for the walls, a local ashlar for the coigns, window-frames, string-course and gable finish. So far as we have yet seen, the original builder—be he Lutwyche or Mytton—has been the only one. There is no trace on this delicious south front of any later hand. The Palladian owner has not cut down gables, set up a parapet, inserted sashes or even removed the old lead-glazed casements. But step inside and you find that there he has given himself so free a hand that you will wonder that he has so profoundly respected the exterior. Even there, however, we do just find his mark. He seems to have desired to save the visitor any shock, and to give him a hint that as he passed through the porch he would traverse a century of architectural time. He left the pediment of the Jacobean doorway, but set in below it a wider arched way of his own age. Before you pass through it, look back down the flights of well-worn steps which you have ascended, and out beyond them at the wide landscape, bounded on the right by the church on the western bank, and on the left by the dignified Georgian stables, which are set under the eastern rise. Then turn round and look up at the strangely Gothic trefoiled ventilating panel which is let in—rather askew—over the Jacobean pediment. No doubt the inner door of the porch originally opened behind screens which in their turn gave into a hall wainscoted with oak panels topped by an ornamental frieze of the kind that one of the illustrations shows some of the upper rooms to possess still. But now the hall is, but for its mullioned windows, a complete example of an eighteenth century type. It is in a style that was much in vogue about 1720 and for a score of years after, when such houses as Ditchley and Stoneleigh were built, and when much decorative work was being introduced into existing houses. This was the time, too, when William Kent was to the fore; but he had his own manner and was less influenced by French taste than other English designers. There is much of the Louis XV. manner—translated into somewhat provincial English—about the plaster scrollwork of the ceiling of



the Shipton hall, while the mask surrounded by sun's rays was a Gallic motif that often crossed the Channel. Console supports to shelves and pediments ruled at Shipton, a frieze with scrolls lying between them. Such an arrangement appears in the hall doorways and chimney-piece, where the excellent contemporary grate and fender should also be noticed. Above the mantel-piece is a bold plaster-work device, where the Mytton bull's head crests the helm; but the shield is bare of arms. The crossed palm branch below appears in English work soon after the Stewarts were restored, and continued to be fashionable for some time after the Hanoverians took their place. We saw it a fortnight ago on a pediment at Okeover, where Rowland Okeover must have been building at much the same time that Mytton of Shipton was decorating. Except in the hall he did not let himself go in the downstairs rooms. The drawing-room, occupying the south west corner and entered through one of the pedimented doors of the picture, is very quietly treated, and the delightful quality of its untouched Jacobean windows is more noticeable than the later get-up of its walls. Northern extensions to the house were the main object of the early Georgian alterations, and the back of the house shows plain brickwork and sash windows. A staircase of that date, approached through the arched doorway of the hall, leads to untouched Jacobean bedrooms to the south, but also to a beautiful eighteenth century library occupying the upper floor of an added building to the north. This room is fully illustrated, as it is a capital example of a modest yet well-finished room of its time. The walls are lined with cupboards and book-cases, the dental cornice of which runs up into broken pediments. But the hearth is the decorative centre of the scheme. The hob-grate — itself a choice specimen — is enclosed by a surround of white marble, the moulding of which is thrown up by a flat of richly veined marble. Beyond that comes crisply carved woodwork. The console supports stretch almost down to the ground and, with the entablature which they carry, are decorated richly but without the least overcharge. The effect is dainty rather than exuberant. From the shelf start pilasters that carry a broken pediment without having an entablature. It is one of the light, fanciful designs then in vogue that did not obey strict classic rule, and that went near to torturing the parts of its composition by the number and unexpectedness of their twists and turns, and yet show so full a measure of taste and dexterity that the result is always estimable and often admirable.

Those who, like Johnson and Mayhew and even occasionally Thomas Chippendale himself, carried the Chinese style to its most frenzied manifestations, produced much that was certainly not more than clever. There is, however, nothing of this extravagance in the Shipton overmantel. It must be admitted that the panels on the pilasters, with their much outstanding clusters of musical instruments and books, are rather large and imposing for the recessed capitals that top them. Moreover, the cantilever-like sweeps of the fragmentary pediment, which are made to support the elaborate framing of the central panel, totally lack the elements that give cantilevers their stability. These are faults if we demand entire reasonableness and honesty in design.

But if we are such purists — or shall we say prigs — we must avert our sensitive gaze from nearly the whole decorative output of the eighteenth century and cut ourselves off from a large and well-stocked field of aesthetic pleasure. Accepting eighteenth century principles as historic entities, we can thoroughly enjoy the ingenious contriving, the brisk handling, the delicate craftsmanship of the Shipton overmantel, and rejoice at the high standard

of decorative attainment which so prevailed in the England of the early Georges as to enable a small country gentleman in a distant province to add a room of so much real elegance to his ancient home.

Such mead of praise Shipton's Palladian work certainly deserves. Yet the modern advocate of the simple life will, perhaps, breathe more freely in the attics, where the local carpenter wrought in that thoroughly native manner which he developed in mediæval times and carried on into the classic age. Such simple and necessary adjuncts as the old ledger doors with their original ironwork give real pleasure. The hinges, sometimes T-shaped with fleur-de-lys ends, sometimes H-shaped with cleverly hammered curves, are the perfection of village smith's work. The large room in the south-west gable that uses one of the shafts of the western chimney-stack for its fireplace and has a round squint window shedding the southern light on to the reader's book as he sits by the hearth, would be full of inspiration for a student occupier. And if we retrace our steps to the ground floor and enter the great kitchen, what an idea of old-time hospitality and of the home preparation of all the appurtenances of good cheer do we not gain from its thirty-foot length, from its firearch with an eight-foot span, from its twenty-foot run of massive dresser, the shelves of which, but a few years ago, still sparkled and glowed "with two complete services of about seventy pieces each of old pewter plates and dishes, all engraved with the arms of the Myttons and those of the families into which they



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OAK PANELLING IN A SOUTH BEDROOM. "COUNTRY LIFE."



had married." Shipton Hall was then a treasure-house in which old English country-life manners and habits were materialised in both fabric and contents. We may regret the

dispersal of the latter, but we must indeed rejoice that the fabric has fallen into hands that defend it from the inroads of machine-made modernity. T.

## THE PLANTING OF PHEASANT COVERTS.

### I.—ON LEVEL GROUND.

IF it were at all possible, in these latter days, to do business after the manner of Rip Van Winkle, it would be very interesting to plant a series of coverts now, so that in fifteen or twenty years' time they would provide all that is most ideal in the way of coverts for the keeping and shooting of pheasants. It is quite true that in the meantime land might have been nationalised, there might be no private property in it at all, and game laws might have been abolished, with the inevitable result that game would have ceased to exist. All this might happen; but it is evident, from the story of the great original, that you are bound to take some risks if you follow the example of Rip Van Winkle.

We take these risks to-day, when we plant coverts over which we hope that posterity will shoot. It may be that game-shooting is doomed. But, in the meantime, it is interesting to plan out coverts, interesting to imagine ourselves shooting them when they have grown to a fair size, and even if few of us can plant coverts from the start with much hope of living to profit by them, we can always improve, or aim at improving, those which we find. It may, at all events, help to pass the idle hour of a wet day to speculate exactly how we should plan out and plant our coverts if we were given a perfectly clean slate, that is to say, an unplanted stretch of country to deal with, plenty of money and an absolutely free hand.

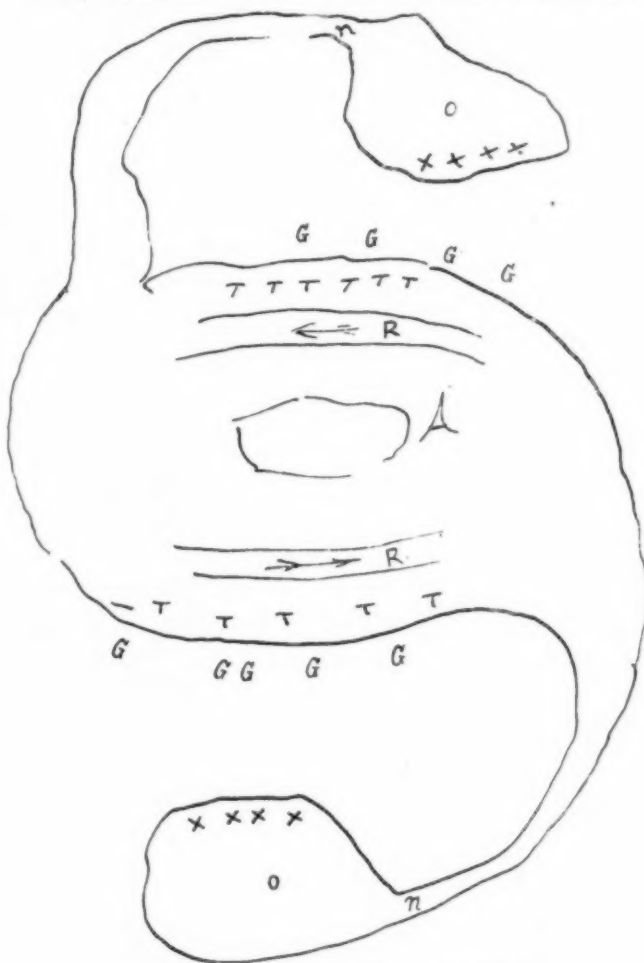
It is obvious, at the very beginning of our speculation, that we must discriminate. We shall deal very differently with the land at our command, place our coverts differently and dispose of it altogether on distinct lines if it be undulating or if it be flat. And since it is very much more difficult to deal satisfactorily with the land to show pheasants advantageously if the ground is level than if it is broken and hilly, we will consider the case of the level land first, for in a great measure it is true that the solution of the more difficult problem includes and overlaps the solution of the easier.

We may, perhaps, leave out of the present consideration, as being a separate question, the ground for the actual rearing of the young pheasants. We will enter on the problem at the phase at which the young chicks are old enough to be turned out into the coverts to look after themselves, of course with a continuance of the keepers' care in feeding them, giving them water if there is not a natural supply, and watching that they do not wander away, but with no further need of attention on the part of the old hen that has hatched them. And perhaps we have already touched a point that may lead to the selection of one spot rather than another as that for the home wood into which the birds shall be turned, and in which, mainly, they shall live. If a spot can be found with a natural water supply, so much the better, for the natural is better than the artificially supplied; but if the natural be lacking then the artificial must be given.

Probably it will be convenient to regard this home wood, as to its size, as of acreage sufficient to be the home of as many birds as you will desire to show on any one day. And how many will this amount to? It is a question of taste, as we have assumed to start with that the question of money is not to affect the solution. Three thousand may, perhaps, be taken as a pretty liberal figure. Obviously, this means a wood of generous measure, say sixty to seventy acres. If you have this number inhabiting your home wood you will aim at a clear space in its centre where birds, to something like this total, can be fed in tolerable comfort. Round that clear area, or centre, you may begin to plant your covert. In planting you must choose your trees and your under-covert also with regard to the tastes of the birds. The trees that they like best for their roosting are those which have flat horizontal branches and foliage. The reason is obvious—the one branch gives them a good floor to stand on, the higher one gives them a roof overhead. The pheasant is no bad judge of these matters. There is no tree that supplies these wants better than the Douglas fir. There are one or two other species of the same genus, such as the spruce (*grandis*, and also the hemlock spruce, *albertiana*), that are good; but, perhaps, this is the best of any on all considerations. It is good, therefore, whatever other trees you plant, to give the birds plenty of this kind. Under its lowest branches they may find good shelter. Then, in his waking hours, the pheasant wants covert to roam about in—covert that is full of berries and insects, for his food, by preference. Outside the wood you will give him arable land, barley and so on, but within he will do a deal of picking too. Nothing is much better as undergrowth than the blackberry, or

the snowberry. The latter is not attractive to the rabbits, which is a strong point in its favour. Do not plant the rhododendron, except at a flushing point, in spite of the immunity of its commoner kinds from rabbits. It is a dripping covert, and nothing grows under it. Under the bramble and the snowberry the grass grows, and there is much insect-life. Cotoneaster is appreciated by the birds, and it is a beautiful thing in itself. Bracken is worse than useless, and should be killed by harrowing over in early summer, if it exists. Young beech and almost any kind of young fir make good under-covert, but nothing will grow under old beech. That has to be remembered. It does not do to have too much of this in your wood. The oak is a fine timber tree, and the birds love the acorns, but it is a slow grower. However, if you give your birds the pines, as suggested, for roosting trees, in fair number, the rest is more or less optional, and the undergrowth indicated may be almost infinitely varied, and some of the best undergrowth shrubs turn a beautiful colour in autumn that adds pleasure to the walk through the woods.

All good foresters say that timber trees do much better if planted in clumps, say four in a clump, than in battalions, and this is as it should be for the pheasants. It is a formation which will let light and air into the wood. Moreover, the birds like to have open glades and room to walk about in, and this can be



PLAN OF AN IDEAL COVERT.

provided best by leaving spaces, like broad rides, parallel with the boundary lines of the wood and a few yards inside it. If your wood is formed in a rough square, glades may run, to meet these other glades or rides, at right angles to them from the central feeding-place. Along these rides your guns may walk in comfort in line with the beaters. The outsides of the wood should be planted with close-growing trees as a wind shelter, which will be appreciated both by the trees inside and by the birds. Such ditches as are necessary within the wood should be made with sloping sides, to give young birds that may happen to fall into them the best possible chance to scramble out.

Presuming this home wood to be thus planted in form, roughly, of a square, from two points of it, diagonally opposite to each other, might run plantations designed to be the means of communication by which, on the day of the shoot, your beaters may bring the pheasants out of the home wood to the two outlying woods where you may flush them and thence send them flying homeward over the heads of the guns. The whole idea of the design is to give you two big stands for the birds inhabiting the home wood, one for the beat out of the one outlying covert, the other for the beat from the other covert. And you may drive the birds in a similar way into each if you have a narrow covert, with the undergrowth not too thick to allow the birds to run freely, bending in a curve not so sudden as that of a horseshoe from two of the corners of your home wood and entering the outlying woods on the further corner of each from the home wood. The object of bringing in this connecting covert at the further corner is that the birds may not use it as a promenade for a walk home, instead of flying as you wish them to. Further to ensure this, a net may be drawn across the portion of the outlying covert into which this connecting plantation gives, and a stop or two be placed there also.

The distance between the outlying covert and the home wood may be anything, and the more the better, up to three hundred yards. It would be well to plant the sides of the home wood nearest to the outlying covert with trees that will quickly grow tall, such as the common poplar or willow, in order to give the pheasants a motive for rising well in order to top them; but to get a good high flight it is a great point to have plenty of space between the outlying covert and the home wood, for the view of the guns awaiting them will, in itself, induce the birds to rise, and the longer the space in which they are rising the higher they will go.

In this outlying covert the object is not so much to make it an agreeable place of residence for the birds as one in which the beaters, or even a single keeper, moving quietly, will put them up singly, or a few only at a time. The undergrowth, therefore, should be pretty dense. Beech, spruce and Douglas fir all make good under-covert and will grow under shady trees. Willow is good, and strikes easily if the cuttings be placed deep into the ground. Here, as everywhere, the practically rabbit-proof

snowberry is excellent, and the rhododendron, for this particular use, not out of place. This under-covert, whether here or in the home wood, should be planted thickly in large clumps.

Of course all this sounds very formal, and much too regular for beauty or satisfaction, but it is the form, the type, that we are suggesting. The accidental irregularities will quickly come of themselves, by the varying growth of the different trees and shrubs. These are the principles on which we should, perhaps, best model our plantations in a flat country to give the best pheasant-shooting possible when the trees are grown to a fair height. In the more undulating districts anything like such formality is neither possible nor desirable.

The note which follows is contributed by Mr. F. E. R. Fryer, whose long experience in the Eastern Counties gives him a right to speak with peculiar authority on this subject: "In planting a pheasant covert solely for shooting purposes (the one covert I describe would be applicable all over the estate) the best principle is to plant a good big holding wood in a suitable locality. Down in a hollow is as good as anywhere else, and there the trees would grow quickly and to a profitable size later on. Then select, at either side most suitable, but not too far off (three hundred yards would be about right), a spot for a smaller plantation. It would be best to have one at the east end of the big wood and one at the west or south-west, as those are the most likely points for the wind to blow from, and you could beat up from the home wood to either of these, according to the wind. Of course, if there is any point where there is any ground higher than the home wood, it would be best to select this in preference. The only way at all possible to get a decent shot at pheasants in a flat country is to walk them in line out of their home ground, even through a chain of other woods, to an isolated one at the end. I have seen this very successful. The further you can get them away from home the better. They will then fly back; but without a leading belt or fence it is no use trying to drive them to a covert that is any great distance away. In selecting what to plant, it is best to look around and see what is growing well already in the district. You will see then what trees and undergrowth are suitable to the soil. It is useless to try other things."

## LITERATURE

### A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

A NOVEL which is attracting a good deal of attention just now is *A Hind Let Loose*, by C. E. Montague (Methuen). The out-of-the-way title is taken from a passage in Genesis, "Naphthali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words," and the aim of the writer, who is himself a well-known journalist, is to satirise modern journalism. It would scarcely have been possible to select a more appropriate theme for an exercise in irony. During the last fifteen or twenty years journalism has undergone many changes, some for good, others for evil. As properties, newspapers have greatly improved, and in the collection, arrangement and presentation of news they are far ahead of their predecessors. But have they lost or gained influence? We are afraid the answer must be "lost," and deservedly lost. Under Delane it was said *The Times* could make or unmake an Administration. Handled by Mr. W. H. Mudford the *Standard* played a great part in moulding public opinion. As much could be said for the *Saturday Review* when Mr. Douglas Cook was editor and the late Lord Salisbury a leading contributor, and of the *Pall Mall Gazette* under the guidance of Mr. Frederick Greenwood and Lord Morley. Few will gainsay the statement that, although the leading articles of to-day are as well written as ever, and the writers equally well informed, the direct influence they wield is trivial. They are brigaded according to party, and on any great event their ideas are known before they are expressed. Opinions are therefore promptly discounted beforehand, and the newspapers fail to express public opinion. For example, the ablest and most flourishing of the Scottish papers hold convictions which, so far as we can judge from the polls, are the opposite of those held by the majority of their readers. If the story told by Mr. Montague reflected anything like the truth, the paradox would be explained. He has chosen for his scene a grim manufacturing town which he names Halland, in the North of England, and the play is between the Conservative *Warder* and the Liberal *Stalwart*. On one point he displays most commendable taste and skill. So evenly does he hold the balance that there is not a sentence or sign to betray what are his own political convictions. Probably this state of mind was induced by his concentration on the attempt to satirise journalism itself, independently of politics. Nor can there be any doubt of the cleverness, the brilliance of his work; but it is, as we hope to demonstrate, the brilliance of burlesque, not of comedy. Mr. Montague's leading character is a clever, impressionable

Irish leader-writer named Fay, who has no convictions of his own, but possesses a rare faculty for interpreting those of other people. He is a Captain Shandon, a professional slogger, who, every night, has ready a strong leader for the Tory paper before twelve, and an equally strong one for its rival, which goes to press a couple of hours later. To one he is Fay, to the other Mahony. In the eyes of a journalist half the cleverness goes for nothing because the situation is not credible or possible. Mr. Montague does not hit the bullseye. Whoever knows the provincial Press is well aware that it is only in early youth that the journalist's mind remains plastic and open. Should the individual remain so he will soon find some more congenial work than writing leaders. The common result is more in accordance with human nature. He who has to fight daily on one side usually turns into a bigot or a fanatic, jealous for the "ism" for which he becomes a hot gospeller. Were this not so, the arrangement would still remain hopelessly wrong and impossible. It is the imagination of one who can scarcely have held the position of leader-writer on an important provincial paper and understood the conversations, talks, discussions that go to form "the policy of the paper." A journal which has its private wire usually gets its leaders over the wire from London. Should it be pleaded that this state of things is exceptional, that Brumby and Pinn tacitly accept praise for the articles as their own, the answer is that a satire on a profession must accept the facts as they usually occur. If not, the irony does not touch the class, but individuals only.

We can imagine Mr. Montague shrugging his shoulders as he reads this, and inwardly making the comment that the point is missed. His real aim was to show how stupidly public opinion is manufactured. The lesson he wishes to drive home is that the proprietor-editor of the provinces is essentially an astute business man, who is grossly ignorant of "the things of the spirit." This man Fay is like a pump. You turn a handle and out comes a volume of print, Liberal or Conservative, to suit the occasion. The stuff is glib, fluent and sonorous, a mere sham and imitation, yet it is preferred to the honest, difficult, intellectual writing of Dick, a young man introduced for the purpose of showing how fine work is rejected, and the noblest promise unnoticed, if not blighted. Dick wants to know "whether the whole Press has gone down all the way to some central water of falsity under the earth?" But the book closes with a scene in which three editors one after the other engage the man who in contrast with Dick



has lied so freely and persistently that he has lost the power of seeing or telling the truth. The caricature is so broad that its effect is nullified; but the book, which in itself is entertaining by reason of its energy, wit and satirical touches, will serve a useful purpose if it induces the public to ask itself how public opinion is formed. Carlyle, in a well-known passage, tells us that to-day the "able editor" is the real preacher, holding forth daily from his own pulpit. Mr. Montague's charge against him is that the preacher is an insincere hireling. He endeavours to show that the writer's pen, like the mercenary's sword, is bought and sold. With this opinion we do not wholly agree. The average journalist is at least as honest as the average lawyer, but, addressing as he often does careless and ignorant crowds, he finds a brief catchword or a blunt assertion more effective than reason. Just as the cords of party are, according to Lord Rosebery and Mr. Harold Cox, strangling independence in the House of Commons, so are they rendering it impossible in the Press. The results are often of a kind to invite the whip of the satirist. That of Mr. Montague is keen, but he lays it on in the wrong place.

In arguing with the writer, however, we must not forget to do him justice as the author of a most amusing novel. He evidently has a good eye for character, as Brumby and Pinn, Roads and Dick, Fay and his wife are all sketched in natural and convincing lines. And the conduct of the journals of the day is a matter that affects, or ought to affect, every citizen, so that *A Hind Let Loose* is very likely to have good fortune and win many readers.

#### UNUSUAL BUT UNCONVINCING.

*In the Shade*, by Valentina Hawtrey. (Murray.)

THIS is a book worth reading, if only for the sake of the unusual study it contains of two entirely non-moral natures and the effect upon them of their own wrong-doing. The point of the book is, of course, that their wrong-doing has no effect upon them whatever, except when, to their great and virtuous indignation, it is forced upon the attention of themselves and their neighbours by relatives unable to see the thing in quite the same light as they themselves think it ought to be seen. There then ensues a period of angry discomfort to the fair-haired, gentle Henrietta, and the moral essayist, Frank, till, having found a new house and an uninformed neighbourhood, they are able to re-establish themselves once more in their respectable and blameless existence and comfortably forget what no one around them knows. The descents at every crisis of Jessie the sister, with her tears of compassion and her unswerving command to them to "tell," are among the best things in the book; but it would have been a stronger piece of work had the past, in real life rarely so easily evaded, been allowed to have a greater effect on the lives of those belonging to the successful sinners. Even the little daughter escapes, since the actual result to her of the revelation of her parents' history is only that the wrong man cries off and the right one returns. That Henrietta is a murderess and Frank a forger matters so little to themselves or anyone, indeed, that the reader begins to feel it really does not matter at all! Whereby the point of the tale is somewhat lost. But the book is interesting, the point of view original and the working out unhurried and well done. The reader is, however, left in considerable doubt as to the consistency of many of the characters. Murder is too violent and terrible a crime to put in a semi-comic picture. Death is the only thing that does terrify even the non-moral. To be convincing, which is the one essential of an unusual situation, the story should have begun before the murder of John, and have shown us Henrietta gradually murdering him. With these reservations, the story is an uncommon and very interesting piece of work.

#### MANY CONVERSATIONS.

*Old Harbor*, by William John Hopkins. (Constable.)

THE method of this story is somewhat self-conscious, and the familiar conversational style is employed. A good many sentences begin with "and," while the author himself addresses his characters with such remarks as "there's many another man, William, has said the same," on William's observing that he does not understand women. To those who like these things this will be a pleasing story. "Old Harbor"—the spelling betrays in what continent it is located—is an old sea-place from which the life has drifted. There is the same feeling of old-worldliness in the people who live there. The reader must be prepared to seek the tale through the wrappings of many conversations, for the author leaves it there almost entirely. Nothing much happens, and no one seems to do much. They do not even die. All the women appear to pursue the men with more or less reserve, and the men are simple good fellows who do not know they love the women till they are told it. Then all is well, and Nan Hatch marries Jack, and Abbie marries William, and everyone is good except Jack Haight, who, for some reason which one does not very clearly perceive, laughs unpleasantly in the last chapter but one. But there is nothing else unpleasant in the whole book, which is worth the wasting of a leisure hour.

#### A STUDY IN SENTIMENT.

*A Stepson of the Soil*, by Mary J. H. Skrine. (Arnold.)

THE story of a child's single-handed fight with the world transcends in pathos the story of any other struggle. The odds are so great and the thing that fights so little and so desperate. In fact or fiction, from *Oliver Twist* to *Henry Stanley*, this theme has an unending appeal. Even when the story is badly told it is moving; when it is well told it becomes an assault upon the feelings. It is extremely well told here in Mary Skrine's *A Stepson of the*

*Soil*. All the figures in this book are good, from the "Master," whose hiding-hole is robbed, to the sly, handsome, careless "Warrener" who robbed it, and who has, nevertheless—for the tale is truthful as it is artistic—a side whereby the girl he loves may pull him back to self-respect and salvation. They are all "peasants," except the "Rev. Fred," himself a stately and sympathetic character; and they are drawn with a directness and an admiration that bring them straight out of their peaceful mystical life on to the page. The "Wise Woman," possessed of gifts now known as telepathy and hypnotism, but well known to our forbears under other names, is a striking conception, with her secret recognition of the indissoluble link between "religion" and "lawful arts." But the best figure in the book is that of the child round whom the story centres—Phil. His desperate attempts to get a footing in a world where he belongs nowhere, his intense appreciation and admiration of domesticity and the things that make a home, his courage and anxiety, his indomitable, unresentful hope, his efforts to be useful and ingratiating, and the way he takes pain and ferret-bites and wounds as things of no account so long as he is successful in his efforts after the one essential—to attach himself to someone: these things are wonderfully described. The picture of Phil running and sobbing alone in the dark and snow on the night everyone turns him out, and he is dislodged from every cranny where he struggles for a foothold, haunts the memory. If a child cannot get understanding and gentleness from the grown people in whose hands its fate lies, it is done for; and too often it cannot. But as the wise woman said, "Them as knows, they be awful precious of the likes of a lone child," and though in the inexplicable waste of life in the real world this is an optimism too often betrayed, for Phil it is true. The "Warrener" is brought to justice and Phil is cleared, and he is left hopeful and contented, a ludicrous little figure with his eager face and huge trousers and his delighted "Oh, 'turn many thanks, sir," for every kindness shown him.

#### THE BLESSED ISLES.

*The Flowers and Gardens of Madeira*, painted by Ella du Cane, described by Florence du Cane. (A and C. Black.)

THE light and colour of the Blessed Isles are in this book, in which the flowers and sunshine of Madeira have been painted by Miss Ella du Cane and described by Miss Florence du Cane. The white and gold of the cover begins the promise which the gorgeous flowering illustrations fulfil, and to turn the pages is to long to go back to the land where such flowers grow and such a sun shines. The "libretto," if one may use the term to describe the literary accompaniment to this chant of colour which is sustained from picture to picture, is adequate and interesting, and even to one who, like the present writer, knows Madeira, tells many things that are new. But the chief thing in the book, as in Madeira itself, is the literal showers of flowers which climb and fall and swathe every corner of architecture where they can gain a footing; and it is this unique and repeated combination of flower and stone that Miss du Cane has rightly seized in her pictures—where wistarias, azaleas, bougainvilleas, daturas, poinsettias, bignonias, endless and wonderful, wreath the wall and door, and throw into a background for their own marvellous colour the blue of Madeira's seas.

#### STORIES FROM IRELAND.

*Irish Ways*, by Jane Barlow. Illustrated by Warwick Goble. (Allen.)

THERE are very few people who can reproduce the real Irish. But there are one or two who can, as an Irishman would say, "do" the Irish, and among them, in the first flight, are two ladies. One is Miss Somerville and the other Miss Barlow. In this last volume of Miss Barlow's *Irish Ways* there are delightful stories, in which that quality which for want of a better word must be called the "unexpectedness" of the Irish people—that originality and spontaneity which the ages never seem to destroy—appears victorious. In "Under the Hill," the old widow tells her tales as none but an Irish nature can, with as keen a sense of the pathos as of the humour of the thing related. "There was a very ould woman died here in Glen this summer; upwards of a hundred she was, and a good ould woman, and very sinisble in her mind. And the day she was dyin', me daughter and meself went to bid her good-bye. And says she to me: 'Ah, Katty, achora,' says she, 'if I could bide in it here wid yous only two days more,' says she, 'I'd be contint.' For when she seen it draw on to quittin' away from us all, sorry she was to be goin'. So you see she wasn't satisfied wid livin' that great while itself. For 'You'll have long enough to be dead; dear—oh, you'll have long enough to be dead.' " "An Unfinished Romance" is especially charming and most touching; while in "Mr. William's Collection" and "And No Thanks to Them" the wit is not less humorous because the reader practically laughs alone, the victims never realising the joke, and the perpetrators hardly considering that there was one. We must add a special and emphatic word of praise to the illustrations, both to the full-page coloured pictures and the little headings. Ireland, the land of softness and veiled skies, in which the light looks always as though it had filtered through mother-of-pearl, is beautiful in colouring, and full justice has been done to it in these real landscapes of the wild country-sides.

#### ART.

*The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art*, by C. H. B. Quennell, L. Deubner and A. S. Levetus.

THE comparison of artistic progress in different countries is always of interest, and this is afforded to some extent by *The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art*. It is only natural that British work has the lion's share of illustration; but one rather regrets that the current decorative art of France is ignored, though it is, perhaps, not difficult to see the reason. The great movement in the direction of shaking decoration free from irrational shackles,

which Mr. Quennell in his essay very properly traces to William Morris and to Norman Shaw, took little root in France save to produce some few extravagances in the New Art manner. French artists are so greatly under the influence of the historical traditions fostered so sedulously by L'Ecole des Beaux Arts that simpler and more natural decorative concepts find small favour even to-day. It is pleasant to note that the wilder vagaries of the New Art seem to be dying out not only in Germany, but even in Austria and Hungary, where their manifestation a few years ago was particularly virulent. Particularly interesting are the illustrations of a house designed by Dr. Hermann Muthesius. He has adopted the angular sun-trap type of plan, made so familiar in this country by Mr. Edward Prior and others, and the house altogether shows very strong English influence. Dr. Muthesius has written well and with insight of the development of English architecture, and we may take it as a compliment that he allows his regard for it to materialise in so charming a way. We can only wish success to his educative work and to the "Werkband"—the German Craft Union—which is doing so much to revitalise decorative art. Mr. Quennell's introduction to the English section of the volume is pleasantly written and pleads for

a departure from eclecticism and a return to traditional methods. He has contrived to give a general conspectus of the history of domestic architecture in a very small compass, and deals with current questions in a common-sense and breezy fashion. One is glad to note illustrations of good work which bears names not very familiar. It is encouraging evidence that artistic achievement is becoming the rule rather than the exception. The nineteenth century was cursed by waves of stylistic fashion. Perhaps we may hope that the twentieth will settle down to work which shall be sound rather than new and clever. C. G.

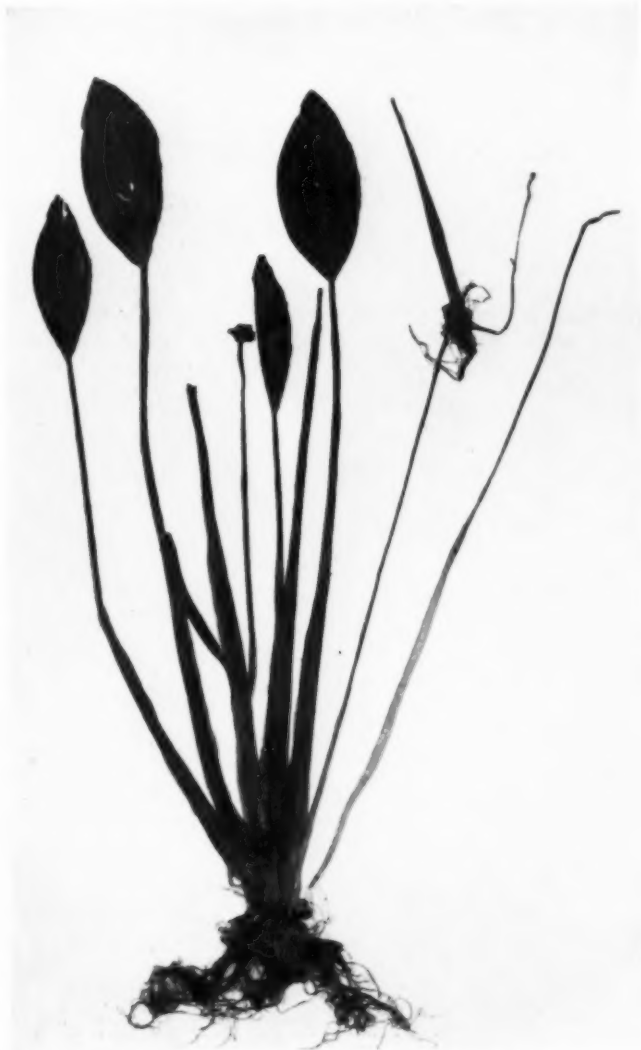
#### BOOKS TO ORDER FROM THE LIBRARY.

Helen with the High Hand, by Arnold Bennett. (Chapman and Hall.)  
An Interrupted Marriage, by E. L. Vornich. (Hutchinson.)  
First Love, by Marie van Vorst. (Mills and Boon.)  
The Romance of Middle Aisé, by Mrs. Campbell Praed. (John Long.)  
The Burman; His Life and Notions, by Shway Yoe. (Macmillan.)  
Greek Lands and Letters, by Francis and Anne Allinson. (Unwin.)

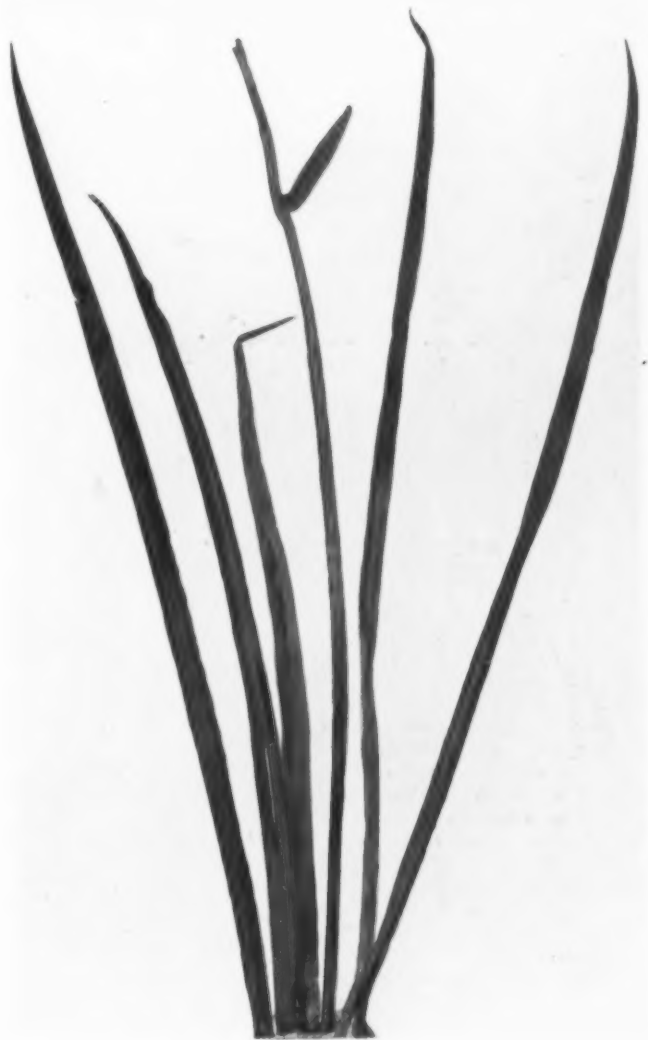
## BY THE CANAL-SIDE.

THE day—the last in July—was hot, the air laden with the odours of paper and other factories that had their yards on the canal. The slightest puff of wind blew into eyes and nostrils the gritty dust of the road. Yet I persevered, for was I not going to see with my own eyes and gather with my own fingers a plant I had never before beheld growing? A dripping mass of it I had seen in the hands of its discoverer the first time he brought it home, and with him had turned over one great tome after another to try and make it answer to some description or plate. In vain; and it was not for some time after that in the *Journal of Botany* it at last figured with name and nature fully set forth.

This Various-leaved Arrowhead I am now going to introduce for the first time to the general public. For, guided by the finder, I presently came alongside the river and then by the canal, at the very foot of some wood yards, on great green clumps, rising perhaps to the height of two feet out of the water. They were too literally "a sight for sair e'en." But it was no



VARIOUS-LEAVED ARROWHEAD.  
(*Sagittaria heterophylla* var. *iscana*.)



SWEET FLAG.  
(*Acorus calamus*.)

restful task to draw from the water the deep-bedded fibres of the roots. So deep into the mud they strike that one had to tug and tug again, risking sudden immersion from the relaxation of effort when finally they were loosened. The previous year they seemed to have flowered more plentifully than this last one, for the difficulty was to discover a plant that had on it any trace of blossom, whereas when first noted the glistening white blooms were conspicuous. At last a tuft with a single flower was secured. It appears in the photograph like a dark globule at the head of the slender stem. Careful manoeuvring had also succeeded in dragging out with the full-grown plant one of the long, creeping suckers by means of which it propagates itself, something after the manner of strawberry runners. This, for convenience of pressing and exigencies of space, had to be bent up alongside the main mass of the leaves, so that in the photograph it appears with its rootlets in the air instead of in the ground. Even so, it was an unwieldy object to carry



in one's arms, especially when reinforced by the other plants pictured on these pages, all dragged out of the same canal. For as the factories were left behind, and the track by the canal ran through meadows, one took heart of grace and pursued it cheerfully. Especially did repose of spirit return when some antique rotted elms were discovered within whose hollow boles it was possible to sit comfortably and eat a frugal lunch, watching the broad landscape that stretched uninterrupted to Countess Weir Bridge, whence soft airs breathed peace into the jaded frame. The arrowhead lying at my side carried me in thought to its far home in Tennessee and Missouri and other States of America, from whence in some mysterious way it had migrated to establish itself upon these banks of the Exe River and Canal, little expectant of so strange a guest. Mr. G. Claridge Druce, who has been down to see the new plant, records in a note in the *Journal of Botany* for February, 1910, that he learned that American wood-pulp is used in the paper factories near by, already mentioned, and that American timber is frequently carried down the canal. So that its introduction is probably explained by these facts. Its nearest and only kin in the British Isles is that white-flowered arrowhead which grows so abundantly in Shakespeare's Avon, and makes part of its "earthy, flowery smell,"

Distill'd from roots that feel the coming spell  
Of May, who bids all flowers that lov'd him meet  
In meadows that, remembering Shakespeare's feet,  
Hold still a dream of music where they fell.

From this common arrowhead our plant is marked off, as its title of "Various-leaved" implies, by a peculiarity in the character

of its leaves. Whereas the British plant has the most perfectly arrow-shaped leaves known, in the American one the leaves are oval, and only in one was a basal lobe to be seen. As the plant does not in all particulars exactly answer to the description of *Sagittaria heterophylla*, Mr. W. P. Hiern, its discoverer, has adjudged it to be a new variety, or local form, and as such has



PERFOLIATE PONDWEED.

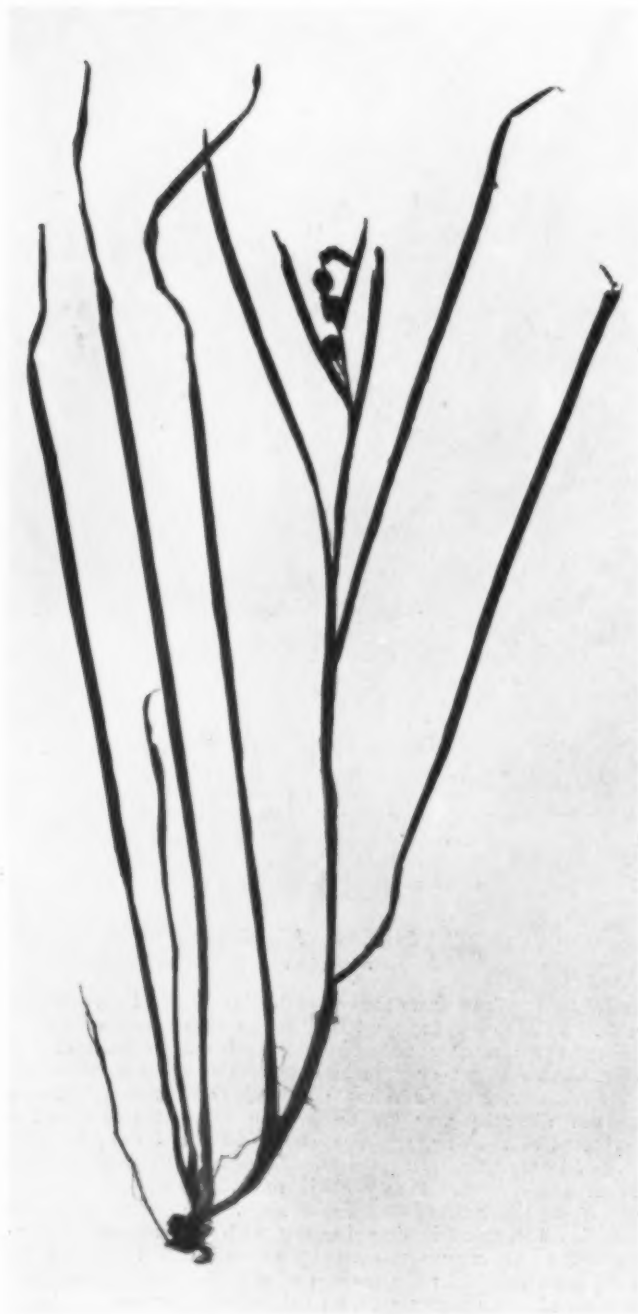
(*Potamogeton perfoliatus*.)

given to it the varietal name of *iscana*—of course from *Isca*, the Roman name for Exeter.

It was delightful in the course of a single expedition to come, further down the canal, upon another non-native water-plant, but in this case one long known and well established—the sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), whose rootstock, on account of its flavour, is a favourite with sailors for chewing. This flag, though not common in the South, grows so abundantly in some watery places in Norfolk that as much as forty pounds has been given for the year's crop of one acre, for medicinal purposes. It is also sold candied. To my taste, in its fresh state there was nothing particularly attractive in the flavour. The scent of the leaves, however, is delicious, and the dainty crimping of their edges a delight to the eye. I never before saw leaves so distinctly what laundresses call "goffered" at the margin. This peculiarity cannot, unfortunately, be reproduced in a photograph, nor was it by any means marked in all the leaves. Some were quite plain and flat, and this made the crinkled margins of others the more noticeable. The flower spadix stands out at right angles with the stem, and we were fortunate to find it developed, in one instance even with ripened seed-cases. Although called a flag, the plant has no connection at all with the familiar yellow flag that in spring spreads above our water-meadows. The nearest relative of the *Acorus* is the arum or cuckoo-pint, both belonging to the family of the Araceæ.

A very common and conspicuous plant of many water-ways is the branched bur-reed (*Sparganium ramosum*), with its curious balls of stiff seed-vessels succeeding the multitude of rounded flower-heads. Not nearly so abundant is the unbranched bur-reed (*S. simplex*) shown in the photograph. Both are near relatives of the great reed-mace, commonly in a dried condition seen adorning drawing-rooms under the appellation of "bulrush," a name which properly belongs to the lake club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*).

The perplexity of specialists is the family of the pondweeds, and we have in Great Britain perhaps not more than two



UNBRANCHED BUR-REED.

(*Sparganium simplex*.)

men qualified to give a decided judgment on varieties of the less well-marked forms; these two, whose authority is undisputed, are Mr. Alfred Fryer and Mr. Arthur Bennett. Happily only one that we drag out of the canal on this occasion is difficult of discrimination, the obtuse-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton obtusifolius*). When the plant is removed from the water its narrow leaves soon shrivel and it is difficult to make out their three distinguishing veins. The very short flower-stalks cause the ripe fruit to look in the illustration like small dots attached to the main stem. The perfoliate pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*) is much larger and more easily recognised. When spread out in the water the diaphanous texture of the leaves makes them reflect the light like transparencies of green Venetian glass. Even these do not equal the effect of the crisped pondweed (*P. crispus*) that I have seen filling the Pool of St. Mary which washes the walls on one side of Whitby Abbey. Of that species the leaves are a rich amber brown, full and curled at the edges. Except those of the alga, fresh-water and



OBTUSE-LEAVED PONDWEED  
(*Potamogeton obtusifolius*.)

marine, so much lower in the scale of vegetation, there are no curvatures in plant-life so full of flexibility as these. An interesting paper has been published, entitled, "A Theory of the Forms of Floating Leaves in Certain Plants," showing how in a flat leaf with flexible margins growing in running water the power of tension, resistance and pressure will, by the action of certain mechanical laws, produce the leaf shape we find in water-plants. But it needs a mathematician to appreciate the methods by which this is proved.

This much can be ascertained even by the most casual observation, that many floating leaves vary considerably in consequence of, or in association with, the nature of the stream in which they grow. So that the meaning of the name given to one class of those we have been considering, *Potamogeton*, a neighbour of the water, need not be considered as altogether fanciful. Between them and the currents in which they dwell is some real life-communion. They are companions of the stream, and that, in a very demonstrable manner, moulds or modifies their structure. C. E. LAFTER.

## HUNTERS AND POLO PONIES.

LAST week saw the end of the spring horse shows, when the Twenty-sixth Annual Show of the Hunters' Improvement Society was held at the Royal Agricultural Hall. It is satisfactory to know that the entries were greater than last year and much greater than the year before that. General admiration was expressed for the King's Premium sires, which were up to a very high average, although, as is always the case, there were one or two common animals among them. In the Midland and Southern Counties' class, and in the Yorkshire class especially, there were some good horses entered, animals very likely to become the sires of good half-bred horses. Wednesday was the day for the Hunters' Improvement Society. The champion was found in Broadwood, who has now won the honour twice, the reserve being Restless. Signal, who was first last year, was only highly commended this time. Mr. Wickham Boynton won the first prize with his chestnut Rapier, by Toledo; Mr. Cairn's Sylvia III., a bay by Pelisson, was second; and Mr. Taylor's Maybird, by Turgot, third. In the four year old gelding class Mr. T. L. Bennett's Sermon, by Royal Minster, won easily, with Mr. Melling's Clonreddan second, and

Mr. Walton's Ping Pong third. In the class for four year old mares and geldings Sermon was first again, with Mr. Hodgson's Alderman second, and Mr. Wickham-Boynton's Rapier third. The best of the five year old mares was Mr. Davies's Alpha, by Wales, with Melody second and Princess of Wales, by Wales, third. Mares and geldings five, six and seven years old and up to thirteen stone seven pounds, were a good lot, the first prize going to Mr. F. A. Rickaby's Restless, with Mr. Ward's Buttevant second and Mr. Cheney's Mallaboy third. There was a very good class for horses up to between thirteen and a-half stone

and fifteen stone. After a prolonged contest Mr. Simpson Hinchcliffe's Broadwood was placed first. In the heavy-weight class the six that were picked out were so close together that the judges had to call in an umpire to give his verdict, which was in favour of Mr. W. G. Mewburn's Barometer, by Roswal. The second prize went to Mr. J. Rohan's Nill O'Neill.

The Polo and Riding Pony Society's Show was also held last week. One of the principal events was the contest for the challenge cup presented by the proprietors of the *Ladies' Field* for the best riding pony in the show. It was won by Mr. Tresham Gilbey's



W. A. Rouch.

BROADWOOD.

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Animation, a chestnut, well worthy of this distinction. She is by that well-known chestnut Arab Mootrub out of Spree, a thoroughbred mare. Originally both sire and dam belonged to the Rev. D. B. Montefiore, who parted with them to Sir John Barker, who in his turn bred Animation. In due time she passed into the possession of Mr. Tresham Gilbey, who trained her. That she won four first-class prizes in addition to the Challenge Cup is evidence, if any were needed, of her sterling worth. Attention has been drawn to the fact that Animation is the first polo-bred pony that has ever won the championship at Islington. Mootrub, her sire, has got several very successful polo ponies, and no doubt the success of Animation will bring Arab stallions into demand. In yearling fillies Mrs. A. R. Poole won with Oyster Bell, a chestnut which ought to have quality, as she is a combination of Rudheath and Seagull. She was bred, as well as exhibited, by Mrs. Poole. A promising pony, exhibited by Miss Taylor and bred by Miss Tyrrell, was Seclusion. She was highly commended, and is likely to win higher honours in the future. In the class for three year old fillies Mrs. Kingwell's Lady Portia, Miss Calmady Hamlyn's Osmunda



W. A. Rouch.

SPANISH HERO.

Copyright.

suitable for military purposes. All that is needed is that the breeder of horses should be definitely informed as to the class of animal that would be most acceptable and that there should also be placed before him such a prospect of remuneration as would make it worth his while to produce the type of horse required. We think, as we have shown frequently in these columns, that there are many farms in the country which could be most suitably devoted to horse-breeding, and would, in the course of time, furnish a supply that would make it unnecessary to rely to any great extent in future on the foreign supply.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOVER.

THE paramount importance of clover in an arable rotation is being more and more admitted both by the scientist and the practical farmer. But the latter as a class is too much inclined to be satisfied with the mere admission, and is not over-anxious to make the necessary changes in his methods in order to give the clover plant the best possible chance of proving its value. This, of course, is understandable. The farmer knows what he may expect from the system which he follows; but, notwithstanding many experiments, he is not sure that a different system would produce better results, and any ill-advised change might bring disaster. Hence, he is careful and makes sure of what is in front before he leaps. As it happens, however, no very great departure from established methods is recommended by those who think they can improve their clover crop without increasing the farm expenses and without harming any one of the other crops of the rotation. The universal custom in the



W. A. Rouch.

ANIMATION.

Copyright.

and Crochety were the best. In the light-weight brood mares Patricia beat that well-known winner, Red Rose. In the produce class Sir John Barker was first with Amazon, and Mrs. A. R. Poole second with Oyster Bell and Coral Reef. The show is a matter of ancient history now, and all that is necessary for us to do is to record the chief events in it. Taken altogether, the exhibition of hunters and that of polo ponies affords evidence, if any were needed, that in this country we possess first-rate stock for the purpose of breeding remounts, even on a scale that would be sufficient for the British Army. What is wanted is that the military authorities should formulate a scheme that would make it profitable for breeders to meet their wants.

The horses shown are designed for the definite use of their owners. Hunters, for instance, are animals that are bred for the sport of hunting, and the polo ponies have come into existence to meet the requirements of a popular game. No doubt the remounts which are most in demand for the Army are different from the ideal prize-winner of the horse exhibition; but there should be no question of the fact that, given suitable mares, of which there is an abundance in the country at the present time, many of the horses that were in the Royal Agricultural Hall last week are the most desirable that could be imagined for the purpose of getting the style of horse most



W. A. Rouch.

OTHRAE.

Copyright.

North is to apply all the farmyard manure to the turnip crop and to supplement this by a liberal dressing of artificial manures. As a rule the dung is applied at the rate of about ten tons per acre, and the artificials consist mostly of superphosphate and kainite, or of dissolved bones, at the rate of four to five hundredweight per acre. When no dung is available, the artificials are increased to about seven hundredweight, and occasionally sulphate of ammonia or some other form of nitrogen is added to the other constituents. None of the other crops of the rotation receives any direct manurial dressing, with the exception of the barley, following the roots, which gets the benefit of the cake consumed by sheep on the turnip break. It has been proved by many experiments in Northumberland that in the presence of a dressing of about twelve tons of good dung artificials are comparatively ineffective so far as the turnip crop is concerned. In some cases no increase of crop followed the application of the artificials; in others a small extra yield was obtained, but not nearly sufficient to pay the cost of the manure. In face of these results it is suggested to withhold artificials from the turnips altogether when

dung is used, and to spend an equivalent sum in top-dressing the "seeds" in autumn shortly after the barley is harvested. This system on experimental plots has consistently yielded a larger total return in four years than when dung and artificials were both given to the roots, and the advocates of change claim that this result furnishes sufficient justification for their proposals. On the face of it, it seems a small change, but it involves greater risk than appears on the surface. It is easy to admit that the dressing of dung would provide sufficient food for a crop of roots; but would the absence of the quickly-acting artificials not prejudice the growth of the young turnip plant at a time when it needs all the support it can get to enable it to withstand the attacks of the turnip fly? If it can be shown that the plant in its early stages is as vigorous without as with artificials, then the new plan would probably be adopted by many. It is quite certain that the clover plant would be greatly benefited by a top-dressing of suitable artificials and, indeed, the success of wild white clover depends largely upon its receiving a sufficient supply of readily available phosphates. J. C.

## ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

### STANDARDISATION OF THE BALL.

IT is rather interesting to see that standard racquet balls have been used for the first time in a competition in the Military Doubles Championship. The effect, or one of the effects, has been to prolong the rallies, by making it more difficult for the server to deliver a service that cannot be returned. This standardising of the racquet ball, and its effect, have a special interest for the golfer in view of all the talk we

have heard about the standardising of the golf ball. That it would be almost, if not quite, impossible to standardise the present rubber-cored ball is certain, both because the standard of the material cannot be strictly maintained and also because it seems almost impossible for the firms, even with the self-same materials, to go on putting out exactly the same quality of ball. Nevertheless, it is always possible that the authorities of the game may some time or other be driven to the necessity, undesirable in itself, of setting up a standard ball, even if it should come to standardising the old solid gutta-percha. That would be a most unpopular conclusion of the matter, but it is difficult to see what other conclusion would be practicable if the ingenuity of inventors were to lead to such improvements on the present balls as would make them fly to such lengths as to reduce to foolishness the present dimensions of our courses. We cannot go on indefinitely prolonging courses; it may be said probably that we have reached the limit in that direction. There will be nothing left for it in that case but to standardise the ball, and if it has to be admitted that standardisation of the rubber-cored ball is not possible, the only alternative appears to be to go back to the solid "guttie" and make that the ball for the game. Perhaps it is a terrible bogey to conjure up; but it is a bogey that may conceivably "materialise."

### POSSIBILITY OF A RETURN TO THE "GUTTY."

Its effect would probably be something like that of the standardising of the racquet ball. It would make for better sport; for there could be no sport with the ball that flew to the putting green of each hole in one. The prospect is really rather an appalling one. We should have a great many of the players, whose handicap has crept up since the introduction of the rubber-cored ball to somewhere in the neighbourhood of "scratch," going back to their old five or six mark again. It would mean that a great many of them would give up the game in disgust, and that might be not altogether an unmitigated evil. In these days of heavy congestion, nothing that could make for the reduction of the number of players can be looked on with an altogether disavouring eye. However, for the moment the ills we have are enough. We need not anticipate.

### GOLFERS IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

Except for the work of the University golfers, most of the recent doings of any of the amateurs that find their way to the public records seem to be achieved in the South of France. At Cannes, Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein seems to have been playing a very strong and a constantly improving game, and many of his scores under 80 are mentioned. Mr. H. E.

Taylor has been at Cannes, too, and he and Prince Albert have been playing together, but with results that are not recorded. Then at Biarritz there are a number of good players, Mr. Everard Martin-Smith seeming to prove himself the best of them and winning the Town Shield with a fine score of 74. Mr. Douglas Currie is another who has been in good form there. Among the ladies, too, the name of Martin-Smith has been very much in the forefront of the Biarritz battle, Miss Martin-Smith and Mrs. Everard Martin-Smith coming

together in the final of the tournament for prizes given by the hotel proprietors of the town, and the former winning. Mr. Osmund Scott, in the Riviera, has been playing with a success which suggests that he is in something very like his old form again; and if that is so every golfer will be glad, for Mr. Scott at his best was a very delightful player to watch. There was, perhaps, none that got so long a ball with so little apparent force put into the stroke, and his approach play was very finished and crisp. We want to see these Englishmen playing well just now, for the time is at hand when they will have to buckle on their armour yet again for that annual fight against the "auld enemy of Scotland," in which they have only once been successful.

### POSSIBLE IRISH TEAM FOR INTERNATIONAL MATCH.

It seems just possible that Ireland may enter a team for the amateur International match, and if that was done it would be a very welcome move which would require some little change of the arrangements, and, perhaps, would mean that another day, if not two, would be needed for "winding up the clew of war." It seems only right to speak of such contests in the Homeric strain. But if Ireland does enter a team it ought to do so quickly, or there will not be much time in which to make the re-arrangements. Hoylake is really a very convenient arena for the Irish golfer. As for the question, always suggesting itself, whether there is any "new blood" which can be drafted with profit into the English side, there is at least one whose recent form seems to give him much claim for consideration—Mr. Hooman, leader of the Oxford side. The Hoylake folk themselves will have an opportunity of sampling his quality when they view the Inter-University match.

### OXFORD'S DEBACLE.

Sunningdale certainly had a desperately strong side in the field on Saturday; but, all the same, something better might have been expected from Oxford than one solitary point. That one point fell to the steadiest of players, Mr. Gidney, and was a very well-earned one, for his opponent was Mr. Guy Campbell. Mr. Campbell does not play so much golf as he used to, but his good game is always alarmingly good. Mr. Leese halved with Mr. Smirke, and the other eight matches—it would be tedious to enumerate them—all ended in Sunningdale victories. No less

than five out of the winning side have at one time or another represented their country in the International match; and, by the way, why is a golfer who has enjoyed that distinction so frequently called in the Press an "Internationalist"? At other games he is called an "International."



MR. G. H. PEACOCK.



That is not in the least an attractive word, but it is less objectionable than this new hybrid.

#### THE SOCIETY AT CAMBRIDGE.

While Oxford were winding up their season of trial matches with by far their heaviest reverse, Cambridge just beat a rather moderate side of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society by one point. It was not a particularly glorious win; but, still, it was a win, and, even as the practicer likes to end with a good shot, so it is well for a side to enter upon their supreme trial with the recollections of a victory. The Society team, as is too often the case, turned up two shor, but the substitutes provided for them, Messrs. Carlisle and Bernard Pigg, performed prodigies of valour, and nearly won a victory for their adopted side. For the University Mr. Campbell, who was driving and putting very steadily, beat Mr. Darwin quite comfortably, while on the other side Mr. Gillies, though very short of practice, noled some stupendous putts, and beat Mr. Ireland by three and two. It was delightful to see Mr. Charles Pigg playing golf again; it is all too seldom that he has the time to spare in terntime. He was beaten in the singles, but came most gallantly to his partner's rescue in the four-ball match with some very long and timely putts.

#### GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY.

These two University sides would appear to have been playing a very in and out game in the last few weeks, so that the reader's frame of mind must be in a state of hopeless confusion as to their respective merits. As a matter of fact, it is probably their opponents who have been so variable and

uncertain. The undergraduate teams are just now in full practice and are likely to remain reasonably constant in form. On the other hand, their adversaries, many of them, play comparatively seldom, and it is impossible to say what they will or will not do. The man who is out of practice will, if he play well at all, play very well, because he comes so fresh to the game and enjoys it so immensely. On the other hand, if he is bad, there will be no doubt about his badness. Therefore if there is a whole team of players, all, comparatively speaking, out of practice, it is conceivable, though, of course, unlikely, that they should all play either their best or their worst upon one stated day. The London golfer is apt to be wonderfully variable in the early spring, and his undergraduate opponent sometimes gets too much credit for beating him and sometimes too little for failing to do so.

MR. G. H. PEACOCK.

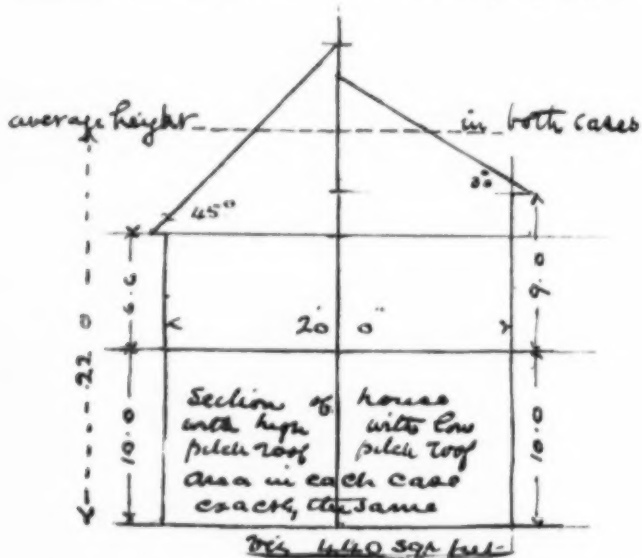
Let anyone who goes to Eastbourne beware of light-heartedly tackling Mr. G. H. Peacock. He will have to play his very best and then he will almost certainly be beaten. Mr. Peacock is not a particularly long player; but he is a very sure one and he knows each deceptive blade of grass on the Eastbourne greens. Why these greens should be so puzzling it is hard to say. They look comparatively harmless; but, in fact, nothing save long experience can teach how many yards one ought to aim to the right or left of the apparent line. Mr. Peacock's fame at Eastbourne is monumental, but he has played some very good golf elsewhere, notably in his native county of Yorkshire, of which he won the championship in 1896. He has also twice been champion of Sussex, and is altogether an exceedingly difficult golfer to beat.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

#### POYNETTS—AND ROOFS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Among many other nice illustrations in your issue of March 5th you give the one of Poyntets, Chilworth, Surrey; but as an architect of a good many years standing I hope you will allow me to make a correction in connection with the relative cost of a building with a high-pitch and a low-pitch roof. I have no objection to a low-pitch roof; but it has no advantage in the way of cost to the high-pitch; in fact, I consider it more costly, as it is more expensive to build walls than roof, and, as can be seen from this diagram (drawn to scale), the sectional area is exactly the same in each case, therefore the cube will be the same, but the walls under the low-pitch roof are two feet six inches higher than under the high-pitch, and for that reason it must be the more expensive. One other point—the house illustrated is a large one, and it does not look as if the work was of a cheap description; and I would not think it possible to build such a house, including the usual fittings, exclusive of decoration, for anything like £2,000.



At least it could not be done for that on this side of the Channel.—THOS. M. DEANE.

[Sir Charles Nicholson, to whom we referred this letter, replied as follows: "The illustration in your correspondent's letter does not meet all the facts of the case, for with the high-pitched roof the bedroom eaves are only six feet six inches high. Thus the bedrooms have partly sloping ceilings, and in order to obtain adequate windows it is necessary to introduce dormers. But with the flatter roof the eaves are nine feet high, so that the bedrooms can be square, with windows up to the ceiling, the rafters' feet are tied together by the ceiling joists, and the eaves can project boldly without serious obstruction of light. The flatter roof has some advantages in economy of sectional area in cases where a range of bedrooms opens off a broad passage as at Poyntets, as this passage need not be as high as the rooms it serves. In this building the cost of (nine inch cemented) walls worked out at about the same price per foot as that of the roofing; certainly this class of walling is not more costly than roofing, area for area. The chief economy of a low roof as used in this building consists in the great simplicity of the construction, the amount of light and air obtained in the rooms, and the advantage of having broad eaves, which are valuable in an exposed situation. The actual cost of the house

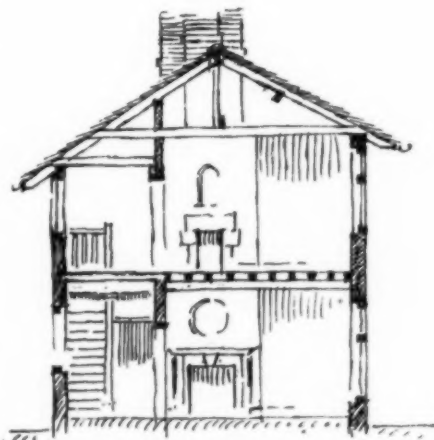
was as follows: First contract, £1,350; south-west wing, £250; two later additions, £300; total, £1,900, to which may be added £100 for sundry minor additions, etc. These figures included ordinary fixtures, but not the garden walls."—ED.]

#### IRISH HORSE-BREEDING.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—“The best horses in the world have been, and are at present, bred in Ireland, for the simple

reason that the climate and soil in a great many places are suited for the purpose.” This statement was made by one of the most eminent veterinary surgeons in the United Kingdom, and I quote it to show more clearly the enormous responsibility which the Irish Department of Agriculture took upon itself when it proposed to introduce half-bred Normandy sires into the country to “improve the breed of Irish horses.” Many of the greatest living experts on the subject of hunters declare that “the present Irish horse cannot be improved upon,” and that “any change will be for the worse.” The Irish hunter of to-day is not only the outcome of good and careful breeding, but also of generation after generation of horses that have been bred and reared on limestone soil, which is undoubtedly the best on which young horses can be reared, imparting as it does that wonderful bone and stamina that are prominent attributes of the Irish horse. To import foreign blood into Ireland is, therefore, to sacrifice qualities which have taken countless years to be developed. Happily, however, for the credit of the Irish horse of the future, the tremendous outcry against this importation of Normandy sires has effectually put an end to the scheme. The Department of Agriculture has assured us that the horses, already bought, will not be brought over to Ireland, and no real harm has been done. Possibly good may come out of the intended evil. Everyone interested in horse-breeding in Ireland has been in such a state of astonishment and indignation at the extraordinary proposals of the Department, that both public and private enterprise should benefit considerably. Searching side-lights have been thrown on the horse trade all over Europe by the interesting letters of buyers of remounts and other large consignments for different countries. These letters form a valuable guide to the requirements of agents sent to Ireland from all parts of the world. At the present time there is a keen anxiety on the part of the French and German Governments to buy up every available horse suitable for war. Our own remount agents are hopelessly outbidden, and the best of our horses are rapidly leaving the country. The German agents pay as much as seventy pounds for a likely trooper, and, at the last fair of Cahirmee, which is now the biggest in Ireland, the French and German buyers had bought up every horse suitable for the army before the fair was officially opened at all. Surely this fact is one which should be faced by the British Government before the Irish market is completely drained of all its best horses. The simplest and most efficient way of keeping the Irish horse up to his old standard of excellence would be to follow the example set us by the German, Austrian and Italian Governments, who have, for many years, been in the habit of buying some of the best sires that can be got at the bloodstock sales at Newmarket. If this were done, even to a limited extent, and the Irish farmers were given a retaining fee for their good mares, the Department of



Agriculture might then justly pride itself on having done its best, in its day and generation, "to improve the breed of the Irish horse."—H. M. WHITTON.

#### SOMETHING IN IT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Away down in the West of England was a farmer that excited the envy of his neighbours by the very fine crops of potatoes that he grew and their seeming immunity from disease. His fields were watched far more closely than many a cat watches a mouse. Still, no information could be obtained from this. Last year, when he felt his career drawing to a close, he sent for me and told me the so-called secret. I fairly laughed at its simplicity and how the discovery was made. Many years back this old farmer was preparing some April wheat in the granary, trusting to a lad. The latter used an abnormal amount of bluestone on the wheat, fairly saturating it. A lot of the surplus moisture drained down through the granary floor on to a heap of seed potatoes on the floor below. Said the farmer, "I did not find this out for some little time and then I thought as every potato was spoiled, and then that boy had the length of my tongue and something else, as seed potatoes were so scarce. I determined to risk planting these, however. I purchased some others as well. Right through those bluestoned ones went without a speck of disease, and as for the other patch, one could smell them for a mile. For a long time I could not make out the reason; then I tumbled to it, and I have always bluestoned my seed potatoes ever since. Five times out of six they were the better for it. I just get a tub, put the potatoes in the liquid of saturated strength, let them just soak enough to get through the dirt to the skin, take them out and dry them or else plant them straight away." It would be most interesting if this was tested on really scientific principles. The singular part of this is that the farmer was using this method long before Bordeaux mixtures and summer spraying were thought of, much less practised. It is well known now that copper is a fungicide, and probably this accounted for the killing of a good many of the disease spores that would otherwise have been planted with the potato in the soil. It seems singular, with all the recently-discovered diseases, that dressing of the potato before it is planted has not been freely recommended.—ELDRÉD WALKER.

#### AN INVASION BY BLACK-BEETLES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be extremely glad if any of your readers could tell me how to rid my house of black-beetles. It is not an old house and stands quite by itself, so they cannot have come through any partition wall. We had lived in it about six months when we suddenly became aware that we were infested with the pests. We tried the usual beetle traps baited with beer and sugar, but without much success. Plaster of Paris and sugar they merely smiled at. For some time past we have been in the habit of paying a nocturnal visit to the kitchen and jumping on them. My wife's sporting instinct has now entirely evaporated, besides which this plan of extermination has other drawbacks. To add to our troubles the disgusting creatures increase and multiply quickly, and during the last few days we have been invaded by hordes of baby beetles, which get everywhere, especially on our nerves, to say nothing of the servants'. Our thanks to anyone who could tell us how to speed the unwelcome guests would be truly heartfelt.—H. P.

[The big beetles ought to have succumbed to the traps, but these will not answer with very small insects. An old-fashioned but effectual remedy is to boil the rind of a medium-sized cucumber in a pint of beer, adding enough sugar to make a thin syrup. It should be cooked till the rind is quite soft, then strained. Stand this about the rooms in saucers with flat sticks propped against them for the insects to crawl up. The effect is fatal and immediate. We should be glad if any of our readers can give any further information.—ED.]

#### A QUIANT CUSTOM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Will you be so kind as to obtain the following information for me? I should like to know if there are other villages in England besides Alfriston (Sussex) where the pretty custom once prevailed of hanging up in the church wreaths previously laid on the coffin of a deceased virgin.—W. R. BULLEN.

#### NIGHTINGALES FOR LONDON PARKS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Is it within the range of practical possibility to induce the nightingale to nest in the more secluded of the London parks? It is a "consummation devoutly to be wished," and worth taking some trouble to realise. To bring that sweetest of all songsters within the hearing of London's millions would be to confer a real blessing on the city. The suggestion has been made that if sufficiently secluded retreats were provided nightingales might come, as we believe other birds have done. But there are special difficulties in the way, for the nightingale builds on the ground, and it would be very difficult to protect the nests from cats, to say nothing of the ubiquitous schoolboy. The difficulties might, perhaps, be overcome, but even if the protection of the nest could be made effective the plan does not seem to go far enough. It seems, indeed, rather like making elaborate preparation for cooking our hare, and then waiting for it to walk into the pot. Too much is left to chance. If the nightingales in the out-kirts of London were increasing in number, some of them in search of "fresh woods and pastures new" might arrive at the leafy seclusion of a London park, and finding it suitable, well protected from cats and so forth, stay there to nest. It might, however, be years before the asylum, however desirable, was discovered. It might, indeed, never be found. We must do more than call our nightingales from surrounding areas by providing a sanctuary for them. We must bring them to the spot; we must catch our hare for the waiting pot. And the plan adopted by Sir John Sinclair many years ago to bring the nightingale to Scotland seems to be the means indicated. As related by Yarrall, this enterprising Scottish gentleman obtained a number of nightingales' eggs

from the South, paying a shilling each for them. These he had placed in robins' nests on his estate. They were duly hatched, and the young nightingales were reared by the robins. At the usual time in the autumn they left for the South, and never returned. But although this experiment failed for Scotland there seems to be no reason why it should not succeed for London. The extreme Northern range of the nightingale in this country is a few miles beyond York, and this is probably the reason why Sir John Sinclair's birds never returned. Another attempt to naturalise the nightingale was made by taking young birds to the neighbourhood of Swansea in Wales. This also failed, probably because the district is considerably to the west of the nightingales' range. But these objections would not exist in the case of nightingales reared in a London park, which would be likely to return to the place of their birth, as migrating birds are usually thought to do, for London is almost in the centre of English "nightingale land." The nightingale will soon be with us, and if the experiment is to be tried, preliminary steps should be taken at once. Arrangements must be made to purchase eggs from naturalists residing in nightingale districts. If these are taken judiciously it need not diminish the number of nightingales in the areas from which they are obtained. Then the robins' nests will have to be found in which to place them. If the theory, held pretty generally by ornithologists, be true, that birds return to breed where they were reared, then the nightingales reared in the London parks will come back next year to delight us with their songs. But the experiment should be made on a fairly large scale, for only a part of the numerous birds migrating Southward in autumn live to return to their breeding haunts. If, however, a score or two of nightingales could be thus reared this difficulty need not exist.—G. W. BULMAN.

#### BIRD SONGSTERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It is rather interesting to see what different ideas different persons, all at one in their love of country sights and sounds, have as to the bird which is really the best of all our native songsters. I am inclined myself to give the palm to the nightingale, and most, I think, would be with me there; but second to him, and so good a second that I almost think he makes a challenge for the first place, I should be inclined to place the thrush, and here I do not think there would be so many in agreement with me. The skylark has a high claim, and it is singular that I have found in America, where the skylark has not been heard, that he is considered to be the finest of the British song-birds. One old Virginian said to me, in an enraptured way, that the thing of all others for which he wished to come to England was to hear the skylark sing. No doubt a good deal, if not all, of this lyrical enthusiasm for the lark is due to Shelley and Wordsworth. To the poetic mind there is, of course, the added attraction of the bird making its spiral way up to Heaven as it sings songs of joy. It is notable, and most of us will think it extraordinary, that Burroughes, the American naturalist, Nature-lover and appreciative writer of the fields and forest, was immensely disappointed with the song of our birds when he came over here, and of them all made the selection, which must appear to us extraordinary, for his personal preference, of the willow-wren. A few of our poets are enraptured of the blackbird. Thus Henley speaks of preferring his "boxwood flute" to the "golden lyre" of the nightingale; but it is not quite clear whether this is said as a matter of pure taste, or in part, at least, because it was to the sound of his flute that some very poetical love-making was done. "Circumstances alter cases." The blackbird has a very high place, no doubt, in Scottish song; but that would not carry a recommendation to Henley. The thrush has such a glorious volume and variety of song that for my own part I can hardly think of placing even the nightingale before him; but it would be interesting to gather opinions on the question.—WEST KENT.

#### AN INTERESTING FREAK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed bird was shot near here, and I am sending it to you, thinking you might know what kind of bird it is. Some friends suggested that it was a canary, but the beak does not resemble that of a canary. The bird was in company with some great tits, and personally I think it belongs to that species, and is a freak of Nature.—E. L. PEARCE, Tiverton.

[Our correspondent made a very good guess. The bird was a great tit, and a wonderful example of lutinism. The head, cheek, ear covers and throat were white, the back and scapulars shading to a darker olive lemon, while the lesser wing covers and bastard wing were very lightly mottled with black. The primaries and secondaries were white, tinged with black towards the points, the outer web of secondaries lemon yellow, tail feathers and rump white, breast and flanks delicate sulphur yellow, belly a paler shade of yellow, bill, legs and feet pale horn colour.—ED.]

#### WINTER EGGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—For several years past I have kept about twenty-eight White Wyandotte hens in confinement, and for the five bad months—October to February—my return of eggs has been: 1906, 1,418; 1907, 1,109; 1908, 1,191; 1909, 1,098; or an average of 43 eggs per bird, my average for the year being over 130 eggs per bird. I never keep a hen for more than two seasons, replacing about half each year with pullets. My "tip" is to hatch out between March 15th and 30th; if earlier they lay in August and moult later in the year; if hatched in April the chances are that you will not get an egg till January. Those hatched in March begin to lay at the end of September and lay right through the winter.—F. W. B.

#### A CORMORANT'S DEATH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A few days since a cormorant was picked up on the beach here dead, having been choked in the attempt to swallow a wrasse fifteen and a-half inches long and weighing, three days after death, one pound fifteen and



a-quarter cuncea. The bird had taken the fish belly upwards, and the dorsal fin of the fish had stuck into the soft pouch beneath the lower mandible of the bird, causing the death of both. The shag and cormorant are known to be most voracious, and I think this is fully proved when it is shown, as in this case, that a cormorant will attempt to swallow a fish one-fourth of its own weight, for the bird weighed, after I had abstracted the fish, exactly eight pounds.—C. J. KING, Scilly.

#### THE TRUE OXLIP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—In a recent issue of COUNTRY LIFE "H." spoke of the oxlip (*Primula elatior*) as growing only in Essex and Cambridgeshire. I have always understood that the centre of distribution of this interesting and rare East Anglian primula was West Suffolk, and that the Essex and Cambridgeshire localities marked the limits of its distribution. Dr. Hind, in his "Flora of Suffolk," published in 1889, gives twenty-eight localities for it in the county; eight of these in East Suffolk are considered doubtful by the Rev. E. N. Bloomfield, who thinks it is not found in East Suffolk, *P. variabilis* having been mistaken for *P. elatior*. I have found it in two or three localities not given by Hind in this neighbourhood. It is quite distinct from the "Polyanthus" primrose often found in clayey woods and also from the not infrequent hybrid between *P. veris* and *P. vulgaris*, commonly miscalled an oxlip. This last would make an excellent garden flower, being very showy; but the flowers of *P. elatior* are too small (not larger than a small *P. obconica* blossom) except for the rock garden. Mr. Chittenden, Director of the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley, informs me that a larger-flowered strain can be got by raising seedlings. *P. elatior* is rare, but abundant where found. I believe it also occurs in one or two places in Hampshire.—T. H. DIFNALL.

#### JUVENILE MOUNTAINEERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—While travelling on Lake Brierz, the passengers on our steamer were very much interested in a boy and girl decked out in their costumes for high mountain climbing. The dress is an exact copy of that which is usually worn by adult males, but it is a very rare sight for one to see a little girl wearing such a costume. Tourists were quite busy in marching up and down the deck of the boat, each time giving something more than a passing glance to the somewhat "stodgy" boy and his charming little sister, who apparently did not mean to be deprived of the pleasure of a high mountain journey by reason of her sex. To crown the attention that was paid to them, I approached their proud parent, who was quite willing that their photograph should be taken. The children seemed somewhat surprised and embarrassed, and yet very happy.—W. H. COX.

#### MICE IN A COUNTRY HOUSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—In reply to your correspondent who writes about his troubles in this way, I was in exactly the same case some sixteen years ago, and tried various remedies; but the cure came from a man bringing in a little half-grown white cat with a face like an owl. In three short weeks every mouse was gone and none has ever returned since. Seeing the miracle worked in this way, I have taken care to have one or two nice little tabbies



A FATAL MOUTHFUL.

in the house ever since. No traps or poisons, or anything of that sort, would have done the work half so well.—W.

#### RABBIT-TRAPPING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—I devour COUNTRY LIFE weekly (advertisements and all), noting hungrily any pleasing flavour in the ingredients which concern what some of us naively call "dumb" animals. Your large outlook and circulation embolden me to ask space for an outsider's impressions on reading the letter in your issue of February 26th on "Sporting Tenants and Rabbit-trapping." Your correspondent "W. C. S. W.'s" views seem as deplorable to me as mine would, no doubt, seem absurd to him, if he noticed them. The question seems to be, baskily, this: Is financial profit or humanitarianism (cumbrous label!) the first consideration in this case? Your correspondent and the landlord evidently put finance first and the rest nowhere. We are told "the landlord fully approved his tenant's mode of trapping the rabbits. In fact, without freedom thus to trap the rabbit the farm would not have fetched so much rent." There we have the case in a nutshell. We are not told whether these traps in the open endangered other animals; but I suppose this seems to those concerned immaterial. At all events, the heathen reader is left in wild perplexity as to whether the Ground Game Act was framed to protect sportsmen from the R.S.P.C.A. or animals from the trapper. Anyhow, I suppose its aim was to secure fair play, but the tenant's apologist seems to ignore that intention. Probably others beside myself would give anything to be able to respect, or even accept, the theory and practice of certain people, otherwise estimable, as regards the animals within their reach. I know one sportsman, for instance, whose awful avowals as to "the sportin' instinct" give me nightmare. It is like meeting a sane and sober friend drunk or demented. (By the way, this man hates riding to hounds, yet suffers it for the joy of joining a large human and canine pack who go forth to lynch one



READY FOR CLIMBING.

plucky little Apache—fox or otter; yet he would not allow anyone to so much as scratch the basest human scoundrel.) Another sportsman with harriers says frankly that he is "not one of those asses who say the hare likes it." The misery of animals in steel traps and of those who realise (even vaguely) their torture—terrified, harassed and mutilated for hours and, unluckily, sometimes for days—is too ghastly not to be obvious. I hope future generations will see such trapping go the way of bear, badger and bull baiting, supplanted by useful and ungross sports—air navigation, for instance. As the penalising of human mental suffering has been civilised away, so one hopes will equally innocent animal anguish be pitied and alleviated in time. The R.S.P.C.A. is already so muzzled, shackled and handicapped that surely it should not be needlessly embarrassed. Your correspondent approves its worn-out horse campaign, yet scathes it for trying to lessen gradually the throes of superfluous animals, equally defenceless and also bred for profit, at home.—G.

#### THE TRAGEDY OF A TAME FOX.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—I see in the issue of COUNTRY LIFE of February 19th a charming picture of a tame fox. I notice the owner keeps a collar and chain on her pet, and, I think, wisely so, for I had a quite tame fox—I enclose Tommy's portrait—but he managed to escape one night and I never saw him again, though only a week ago hounds hunted a fox through our kitchen garden and all round the house. They did not kill, and I have wondered since if it was Tommy, and whether he came home when hard pressed.—FRANCIS PITT.



"TOMMY."